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SERMONS

SERMONS

PREACHED IN

St. Thomas' Cathedral, Bombay

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BY

THE RIGHT REV.

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TO

THE VERY REV. RICHARD WILLIAM CHURCH,

DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S,

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT BOTH

OF MANY PERSONAL KINDNESSES, AND OF ALL THAT HE IS TO

The Church of England.

PREFACE.

A PREACHER who publishes his sermons is expected, and rightly expected, to give a reason for offering them to the world. Having been composed to be listened to once, they are presumably less adapted for reading than if they had been written for that purpose.

Some preachers find a full justification in the knowledge that the appearance of their sermons is looked for by the reading public. The present volume has no such warrant; had, indeed, no warrant, to begin with, save the earnest desire of the preacher to address himself to a wider audience than he can reach from an Indian pulpit. He was encouraged to make the attempt by the kind words of the honoured friend who has accepted the dedication of the volume. He was allowed to submit two or three sermons to the judgment of the Dean of St. Paul's, and the Dean pro-

nounced in favour of their usefulness, should a publisher be found to undertake them.

But in thinking over his reasons for publishing, he has found some farther encouragement in his relations with his original audience.

Every preacher must owe much to his congregations, unless his own want of sympathy and humility make him incapable of learning what they can teach him. And cultivated Indian congregations can teach their teachers a great deal. The one thing which they cannot away with is assumption, either moral or intellectual. Plain speaking they welcome and respect; but it must be the plain speaking of sympathy, not that of assumed superiority. They will appreciate the best thoughts of the ablest men; but any kind of intellectual affectation will be seen through and resented on the instant. They will be generous in accepting as real the highest standard that one is capable of setting before them; but every sentiment that does not come from the heart will be detected, and, being detected, will be despised. Lastly, if an Indian preacher would be listened to, he must see to it that he says what he has to say within certain well-defined limits. And even while he keeps within those limits

he must remember that there is no room for superfluities. Lengthiness and "padding" alike are instantly fatal to attention.

But let a preacher aim steadily at four things, at sympathy, at directness, at reality, and at brevity, and he will find in an Indian congregation an audience delightfully responsive. If one does not learn much from such hearers it can be nobody's fault but his own. Should these Sermons prove useful to any one, it will be due to what the preacher has learnt from the congregation for which they were composed. God grant that they may not be wholly useless.

AHMEDNAGAR DISTRICTS,
6th February, 1889.

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SERMONS

WHAT IT IS TO BE WITH JESUS.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.—*Acts* iv. 13.

YOU can picture the rough, common-looking fishermen before the court of lawyers and priests; uncultured, in the presence of the learned; prisoners, and at a prisoner's disadvantage in the face of constituted authority. And then picture the astonishment of the judges when it was found that they could not be put down. There was nothing of assumption about them, only a simple directness of appeal from the injunctions of earthly superiors to the commands of the Judge who is above, from the experiences of

every-day life to facts of a different order: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye. For our part, we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." No wonder that such gentle assuredness raised a wonder in the minds of the court.

For, prejudiced as the tribunal might be, they were too clear-sighted to suppose for a moment that it was matter of mere fanaticism or obstinacy. They did not admit the great facts which were the actual foundation of what astonished them, did not believe that the Teacher whom they had crucified had risen and ascended into Heaven. And yet the unwonted bearing of the prisoners required something to make it intelligible. They found it in one simple fact—the men had been with Jesus; it was companionship with Him which had done it all.

Yet why was it that being with Jesus should be so different from being with other men? How was it that the personality of the Teacher could so pass into the lives of His followers; that His friends had become so pervaded with

His spirit, that all things were transfigured for them now; that life seemed to them but one long opportunity for taking in and for impressing upon others what Jesus had been to themselves?

If the disciples themselves had been asked what it was that had made converse with Jesus so wondrous a power in their lives, their answer would surely have been *this*: That it had come with growing knowledge of what He was, from what they had learnt about His character and His person from the study of His words and His acts; that His character had grown on them by degrees, till all their ideals of holiness had been transformed and revolutionised by it; that whatever they had rightly thought before about goodness in the sight of God and man had been embodied in what they saw of their Master; that everything which He did not exemplify had ceased, from the time that they knew Him, to form a part of their conception of goodness. Then miracle and teaching combined had made them recognise in the Person of their Master something more than a mere human perfection.

Each glimpse of the awfulness of His sanctity had come to them with the shock of a revelation opening a door into the secrets of another world. And so they were led on to the intuition by which they had recognised Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And now they were prepared to affirm that it was not only that they had been with Jesus, but that Jesus was with them here, and now; that in the person of the Spirit whom He had sent, their Master, risen and ascended, was present to them more intimately than ever.

Such, I think, would have been their own explanation of what had so puzzled their judges—that they had been with Jesus indeed, had known Him with an ever growing knowledge, as Teacher, as Saviour, as God; that they had so been with Jesus on earth, that He was with them now, though in heaven; that they habitually lived in His presence; that there were times when they retired from the world to abide in that presence alone.

For he who has been with the Lord Jesus has the secret of spiritual life; he brings some-

thing from the shrine of that presence which marks him off from the rest of the world.

We might all bear the marks of it if we would; might all carry something about with us by which all who came near us should take notice that we, too, had been with Jesus.

Let me go through a few stages of the process by which it might so surely be brought about that His likeness and the power which He bestows might be stamped on our characters and our lives.

We may begin where the Apostles began, with knowledge of the character alone. That, seen as it is possible to see it if studied for its own sake in the Gospels, can do more for us than I can put into words, more than any one can realise or believe till he has learnt it by actual experience.

It seems impossible, almost, at first sight, that to read the mere memoirs of a great character, and those memoirs as fragmentary as the Gospels, can convey anything of the same vivid power which contact with the living man might have brought with it.

If you ask me how reading about Jesus can thus potently sway our inmost hearts, I can only say one thing in reply, and that is that experience will teach you. Take the four Gospels and give them a fair trial. You must take them and read them upon your knees. Superficial acquaintance with them will not do it. The critical study of their text will not do it. Take the scenes and try to live through them as matter of spiritual experience. Take the discourses and test yourself by them. Try to set side by side in fair contrast, yourself and Jesus of Nazareth. Then see whether you rise from the contemplation exactly the same as before.

If the trial has been a real and a fair one, you cannot but feel ashamed of what you are; cannot help feeling some longing to be different. His tenderness, His purity, His sternness, the infinite pity of His spotless nature, as He looked down into depths of degradation, and saw there the possibility of better things—the thought of these must alter your standard as you look at yourself in their light.

But dissatisfaction with yourself is not the whole gain which will accrue to you from gazing into the unfathomable depths of the human character of Jesus. A longing, and something more than a longing in some degree to be what He was, must come to you as the result of the contemplation, if you do but give the merest fair play to the nobler part of yourself.

For not the least marvellous feature of the character of Jesus of Nazareth is that, incomparable, unapproachable though it be, it is yet capable of universal imitation.

On the reason I will not now dwell; but such is the unquestionable fact. Set the history of human goodness before you, and choose any other character that you will, and you shall find that to one it brings encouragement and the stimulus of a healthy example, while to another the contemplation of its virtues brings only despair of their attainment; and to a third it can make no appeal, because circumstances, or temperament, or both, are felt to make sympathy impossible.

With Jesus it is utterly different. Men and women, children and adults, priests and laymen, learned and uncultured, all persons in all ages of our era have found that He appealed to their hearts, have longed to live by His example, have found that it was possible to them to do so.

But, indeed, it is not only example which comes to us as we study the Gospels. Fix your gaze on the picture which they reveal, and you will find that it is more than a picture.

The eyes that look out to your own from beneath that thorn-crowned brow—they are no portrait of one who lived once; it is not across the waste of the centuries that they meet you with their unutterable love. Nor is this but an intensification of that sympathy which has power to bring before you the eyes that have looked love into your own, and which now look to you across the ocean or the grave.

Look again. There is more in it than that. It is Himself that is so marvellously near you.

That inadequacy which His example has

brought home to you, that unlikeness to Him which you are ashamed of, those blots in heart and life which stand out as His light shines upon them—He sees them, He grieves over them ; that is why you have learnt to recognise them yourself.

That feeble aspiration after good, so half-hearted, so hindered by evil—that, too, He is able to discern : nay, you owe it to Him that it is there.

And when once you have made this a reality, it will be impossible that you should stop short and go no farther. A Friend who can be with you here, and now ; who has power to be more to your inner life than the dearest who are visibly with you ; One who can be to you more than an exemplar though He lived long centuries ago—such an One, you must recognise at once, can be no mere man like yourself, differing from you in nothing more essential than in the superiority of His character to your own. Can you stop short of acknowledging Him to be That which His followers have called Him in every age? Can anything express

what He must be to you except the cry of His once doubting Apostle who hailed Him as "My Lord and my God"?

Believe me, it is the question of questions whether you are prepared to accord Him this tribute. Do not think that if you take Him as your pattern it makes no difference whether you worship Him or not. It is no mere matter of subscription to a creed, no point of philosophical opinion, which is in question between His worshippers and other men. The attitude of your whole moral being is what turns on the yielding or the withholding of the adoration which is due to the Lord Jesus. The difference comes simply to this—whether the life which we live upon earth is a natural or a supernatural life, whether we are limited in the possibilities of our being by the little powers which we brought into the world with us, and the opportunities which we have had of developing them, or whether we carry about with us at all times possibilities of an endless development which eternity alone can see perfected. "The life which I now live

in the flesh I live by the power of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me"—such is the experience of the worshippers of Jesus, who throw themselves upon what He can do for them when they accept Him as their Lord and their God. The things which are impossible to flesh and blood become actual facts of their experience when Jesus, by the power of the Holy Ghost, lives in them and transforms them into His own likeness.

Our Example, our Friend, our God; our Example to bring home to us the possibilities which lie within the power of every one of us; our Friend to bring them within our reach instead of merely holding them out to us from afar; our God to make them actual fact by Himself living in us for their realisation—all this He is ready and more than ready to be to every hearer of the Gospel who wills to make his own, as a real experience, what it is to have been with Jesus.

But perhaps it has never thus come home to you, and you are doubtful of its being all sober fact. It all sounds so like a figment of mere

fancy, so much what an imaginative temperament might exalt into objective reality when it was but the baseless fabric of a vision.

Again I do but ask you to try. To thousands of sensible men and women these things have been veritable realities. Take knowledge of them and you cannot but see that they, too, "have been with Jesus," that He has been a power in their lives not simply as an Exemplar in the past, but as transforming them by His Spirit here and now. Throw yourself frankly upon it and try to live by it, and there is no fear that you will find it disappoint you. You, too, will make your own the great experience, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

THE ANGER WHICH IS A VIRTUE AND THE ANGER WHICH IS A SIN.

Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath; neither give place to the devil.—*Ephesians* iv. 26, 27.

I THINK it is almost startling to most of us to find anger thus inculcated as a virtue, with just the caution that it may lead us into sin. Our associations with anger are so painful: the raised voice, the flushed cheek, the bitter words, all that tells of inadequate self-control, of indignation disproportionate to the offence, of irritation against the person of the offender instead of calm disapproval of the offence—sad experience of ourselves and of other people make these things occur to our minds as our common associations with anger. And worse

things than these manifestations are almost inseparable from our thoughts of it: some tendency to sullenness or vindictiveness, to uncharitable thoughts and bitter words, some dislike to meeting with the offender, some difficulty in being cordial when we do meet—these things are humiliating to us if we are conscientious, and unpleasant if we aim at a balanced mind; and we all know how hardly they are avoided when once we have been roused into anger.

And yet, here we have the Apostle inculcating it as part of the life of a Christian, that he is to be angry and sin not.

A smaller man might have given us other counsel; might have cautioned us not to be angry for fear we might fall into sin; might have said, if you must be angry, then be so with as little sin as may be; might have treated anger as most of us treat it, as a sin which under some circumstances is excusable. But it was part of the large-heartedness of the Apostle, of that breadth of moral judgment of his which was as wide as human nature

itself, to recognise in the impulse of anger the raw material of infinite nobility.

He treats it as he treats every impulse which is implanted in our hearts by our Creator, as having taken an evil twist from the fall, but yet as being indifferent in itself, and taking all its moral character from the will.

Just a word, then, on that underlying principle, before we treat of anger in particular. Every feeling which is natural to humanity is implanted by the Creator with a good object, is right when it attains to that object, is wrong just so far as it falls short of it ; and, being implanted with a good object, must never be thought of as sinful except when we ourselves misdirect it.

The worst passions which disgrace human nature are right feelings which have been distorted into evil. With right objects they had become part of a noble character. It is the wrong objects to which they have been directed, the wrong excesses in which they have been indulged, the failure of our will to guide them straight or to retain them within proper bounds—it is these, not anything

in the mere passions, which constitute sins before God. To apply this to anger in particular—God intended us to be a restraint upon one another. The inveterate selfishness of our hearts leads us constantly to interfere with each other's rights, or to neglect the correlative duties which those rights impose upon ourselves. And the principle of anger is implanted in us to give us a wholesome fear of one another. Since unselfishness does not restrain us when we are tempted to interfere with people's rights, since conscientiousness does not compel us when we are tempted to neglect our own duties, it is needful that we should each of us be aware that there is something which may flash out at us in a moment and make us sorry for our selfishness or our laziness.

When St. Paul inculcates anger as a virtue, the anger which he has in his mind is that which makes wrong-doers afraid, which blazes out at them because they are wrong-doers, not simply because we are injured, but because that which injures us is wrong-doing.

And this, I think, is something very different

from anger as we most of us display it. Nine times out of ten that people are angry there is no thought of the wrong-doing of the offender, but only of the fact that it annoys us.

Perhaps we are but irritable and uncomfortable, and there may be no wrong-doing at all. Perchance we so surround our own dignity with the figments of a morbid imagination, that we are ready to imagine an offence where right judgment would never have suspected one. But, granted that we have cause to be angry, still I fear that in the majority of cases it is not the wrong-doing that arouses us, but simply the injury that is inflicted on our interests, our dignity, or our comfort.

This then is the first characteristic of the anger which is a virtue and not a sin. It must be directed against wrong-doing as such, and not against mere personal injury.

And the second condition is this, that it must be restrained under the control of our better judgment. It must neither be disproportionate to the offence, nor must it get the better of our self-control.

It must not be disproportionate to the offence. So natural is such disproportion, that God's law before the coming of Jesus Christ, was that you must not take more than an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth. When judged by the standard of the Gospel, the principle sounds horrible and vindictive. But it is true, as a great writer has taught us,* that it was all that people could understand to begin with. Leave men to their natural impulses, and they will take an eye or a tooth for a sharp word, and life itself for an eye or a tooth. To teach them the law of retaliation, of doing no more than was done to you, was an enormous advance to be made in the attainment of true self-restraint. And short of such vindictiveness as this, our self-control must not be lost in our angry moments. The passion must be used as a good servant; it must never get control of us as a master, or it will make us say and do what we shall be sorry for.

And in following this thought into detail,

* Archbishop Trench, "St. Augustine on the Sermon on the Mount," p. 216.

we cannot do better than expand the two precepts which are given us by the Apostle: "Let not the sun go down upon irritation on your part; neither give place to the Devil." They inculcate two forms of self-control which must characterise all righteous anger.

"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath;" in other words, let anger do its work, and then let it be dismissed like a servant. As it is a passion which, in all but the very few, must involve perturbation of spirit, let the perturbation, which perhaps is inevitable, be at all events as short-lived as possible; and in any case, when night is coming on, the season which in the language he was using, was called *Euphrone*, the season of good thoughts, when the self-examination is made, and you call yourself to task about the day's duties, then be sure that the soul which has been disturbed be recalled to its ordinary calm. A very complete self-control, if we think of it, is involved in fulfilling this precept. For it means that the will has made use of the passion, and has not been in any way enslaved by it.

I have known, I think, one man in my life who seemed to have attained this in perfection, who could treat anger as an impulse to be made use of when it came to him naturally and freshly; who, without being a slave to it for an instant, could give it course till it had crushed the offender; who so used it just because people were wicked, and never because he had been injured; and who, when his righteous indignation had cowed the evil-doer into submission, could dismiss it, and be, in an instant, as though he had never been aroused.

St. Paul's second test of self-control is: "Do not give place to the Devil." Just observe the exact word which he uses; not Satan, the adversary; not the Evil One; but, *Diabolos*, the *Devil*, the slanderer. It is in that characteristic of the Evil One that we are to allow him no place in our angry feelings, for it is exactly in his character of false accuser that we so easily resemble him when we are angry. When any one has really offended us, then nothing is too bad to attribute to him; we cannot credit him with any good thing; cannot construe

his plainest actions aright. If we keep ourselves from slandering him in words, how constantly we wrong him in our thoughts! and if we attribute to him no evil, yet it is hard if we appreciate his good points. And so the Apostle enjoins us, if we wish to be angry without sinning, to test the self-control that we exercise, by trying if we can think of the offender without attributing evil to him wrongly.

And this leads us to the great final test by which Christians should gauge their angry feelings. A thoroughly high standard of heathen morals might possibly so regulate anger as to conform to all the tests we have yet looked at. I will not say that it ever has done so, but still it is conceivable that it might.

But if we can so regulate indignation as to discriminate with absolute justice between that in the offender which is evil, and that in which there is no case against him, this shows that we have advanced pretty far towards separating the sinner from the sin, towards directing our wrath against the evil, while we think with only love of the evil-doer.

And to do this is to be a Christian indeed. For to do this is to base our rule of anger upon that which God Himself has adopted as He dealt with a sinful world in Jesus Christ.

Let us look at it, then, as Christian men who hope everything from the mercy of our Father extended to ourselves in Jesus Christ. We have but just come out, the very best of us, from that chamber where the King upon His throne is sitting to take account with His servants, as Our Lord has described to us in the parable. Happy for us if our debt has been acknowledged, and, being acknowledged, has been remitted. And coming forth from that awful tribunal, still more awful for the goodness which has been shown us—"There is mercy with Thee," says the Psalmist, "*therefore* Thou shalt be feared"—coming forth from that awful tribunal, all a-tremble with the searchingness of the judgment, all aglow with the marvel of the mercy; coming forth with the cancelling of the great debt, we encounter the indebted fellow-servant. Those hundred pence, we bethink us: they have never

been paid to this day. And in an instant, unless we are on our guard, all remembrance of the mercy to ourselves, all the tremulous thanksgiving of the great deliverance, all the thought of how the sternness of the Judge has given way to the love of the Father, all the tenderness of the joy of the absolved, all the resolves of the penitent in his gratitude—they will melt away under the thought that we have been injured, that even now the wrong-doer may have the best of it. "Pay me that thou owest," we thunder out. Or if you will not pay by compensation, then give me out the value in punishment. I do well to be angry, we insist: it is a debt, I am but claiming my own.

We do well to be angry, perhaps, but to be angry against what or against whom? Our Heavenly Father did well to be angry, but against what was His anger directed? The fact that you stand unscathed by His judgment is answer enough to that question. Retaining His abhorrence of evil, He yet has loved us who were given over to it. He has so abhorred evil, that nothing was too humble for

His Son to endure to set us free from it. And thus abhorring my sin, He loves me, who had identified myself with it.

What am I, then, that I should dare to be angry against any whom my Father will forgive, against any who are redeemed by the same Saviour?

To sum up: Be indignant if you will against everything that is mean, that is unjust, that does wrong to the helpless and poor, that neglects the plain duties of life. Be angry; it is a virtue to be so; the Apostle enjoins you to be angry.

But, being angry, remember your own weakness. Remember that the feeling you are indulging is one which will carry you too far unless you are strictly upon your guard.

If the sun is going down upon your anger, then ask yourself if your impulse is so mastered that it is possible for you to be angry without sinning.

If your thoughts are running riot in your bosom, and you are attributing to him that has offended you bad motives or general

worthlessness, then ask whether, in the words of the Apostle, you are not "giving place to the slanderer." In either case, it is the sinner, not the sin, against which your indignation is directed, else you could not be brooding and vindictive, could not fail of self-control, and so of justice. And this, remember, is no matter for trifling. Your ultimate hopes of salvation depend on self-conquest, through Christ, over all that can make you unforgiving. And even if you can so far overcome as just to save yourself from the doom of the implacable, yet surely you would not bring a cloud over the face that has beamed on you in forgiveness; would not wish to be as little like Him as is compatible with belonging to Him at all. Being one who has been greatly forgiven, you would not be one who loves little.

When, therefore, you are angry against sin, remember that Christ died for the sinner. So remembering, you will be self-controlled at the time, and will be forgiving and charitable afterwards.

THE CROSS OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY IN INDIA.

See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, and to build, and to plant.—*Jeremiah* i. 10.

AT the culminating moment of the great struggle in which our Lord overthrew the Tempter, we are told that in a moment of time He was shown all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and was told that by one act of apostasy He might enter into possession of them all.

Another sight was at the same moment before His eyes as the illuminated gaze of His spirit looked through the fair promises of the Tempter. Plain before Him there stretched

away into the future the Royal Road of the Cross. A kingdom—yes, He had come to be a King. But as the offered prospects were spread so temptingly before Him, His gaze rested on that awful throne of agony from which He was to reign crowned with thorns. And even now, as afterwards before Pilate, He was saying, as He viewed the kingdoms of the world: "But now is My kingdom not from hence."

And yet, since He was man like ourselves, the prospect which was spread before His eyes was one on which they well might have dwelt with a longing to appropriate it as His own. The whole world crushed into peace, because, within the pale of civilisation, there was none who could presume to move a finger against the absolute power of the Emperor; this marvellous military despotism, reposing upon a fabric of law so perfectly scientific in its principles, that to this day it is the basis of jurisprudence for much of the civilised world; the whole pervaded by that exquisite culture with which humanity had been enriched by peace, and accessible by means

of the language in which that culture had found its expression.

All this was before Him on one side. On the other lay the Shadow of the Cross. Which prospect did it behove Him to choose : the easy possession as it appeared, of all that He had to conquer for God, or the apparent failure of His mission, with the agony of martyrdom as its close ?

The easy alternative was saddled with one condition, that He should turn His back upon Him who had sent Him, and should seek Himself, not His Father in heaven. But we know how the answer was given, the unhesitating "get thee behind me."

And yet, as the tempting prospect was put by, the words spoken to the prophet of old must surely have rung in His ears: "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, and to build, and to plant."

As Jeremiah was made to hear the crash of empires, of nationalities, of institutions,

toppling down before the word of the Lord, and yet had to receive the stern command: "Thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak"; so the Lord, when the kingdoms of the world were thus offered as the price of apostasy, had before Him the ruin that would assail them if He refused thus to make them His own. That vast empire which was laid at His feet; it was fated to crumble down into destruction as soon as it had done its work for the Church of God. He could see then at work in its very vitals that horrible moral corruption which was to end by making it a prey to the barbarians. Was it nothing in the eyes of His compassion to see all that glory of empire coming down into such utter destruction? He must have thought how the morality of the Gospel might have been grafted on the civilisation of the empire; how the regenerating power of His own teaching might have saved the mighty mass from corruption. And yet, if the opportunity had to be purchased at the expense of unfaithfulness to His mission, though

it presented itself as an opening for all usefulness, it must be met with "get thee behind me."

Let any one be called by the Master to engage in the mission work of the Church in India, and it is certain that no long time will elapse before he will have to hear the stern message which came to the child-prophet from the Lord. He had protested against the burden of prophecy being laid on his young shoulders so soon, in words which, in some form or another, must be wrung from the lips of every worker who realises the meaning of mission work: "Oh, Lord God, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child." And the answer came, stern and unbending, the command of the most high God: "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, and to build, and to plant." Let a man who has had a few years' experience of the working of missions in India look out across the country as he knows it, and ask what would be the effect if Christianity

became the religion of the people, and I think that the answer will come to him very much as it came to Jeremiah. He will recognise plucking up and breaking down as the first effects which the Gospel would produce on the social life of the country where he is working. For he knows that he is face to face with a system which embraces every detail of life as part and parcel of religious observance.

I took part the other day in a discussion on the admissibility in the life of native Christians, of certain ceremonies used at weddings by Hindoos. "My Lord," said a native clergyman who was present, "if we are allowed to do nothing as Christians which we associated with religion as Hindoos, we must not eat or drink, or draw our breath, for a Hindoo does each of those things as a directly religious act." Nor is it only the all-pervadingness of the system which makes us feel, as we think of its dissolution, how vast the break-up must be. It is also that we learn to recognise in it the admixture of such wondrous moral power along with much that is so unspeakably revolting.

The very system which is responsible for the things of which some of us have heard with a shudder, can show fruits by which many Christians are put to shame. Nor dare we say, as we might have been inclined to do at first, that it is in spite of, not because of, their religion, that we see in the life of Hindoos such virtues as the family affection which makes this country independent of a poor law, and the sobriety which makes it a pattern to Christian England. It is in spite of the defects of their religion, but itself is a part of their religion; and it is only when caste has been broken down that we recognise the power of its rules to do, in externals at least, the same work which is effected for good Christians by the inward discipline of conscientiousness. I would not be understood for a moment to mean that it comes to the same thing whether people are restrained from what is evil by the inward discipline of the Spirit or by the outward conventions of a caste. But I say that when caste has scaled off, and the man is free from the external constraint which had been exercised by the stringency of its rules, and we

then try to regulate his life by the power of the Holy Spirit within, we learn what a wonderful motive-power the external rule has supplied; for we often learn how the character will collapse when that which held it up has been withdrawn.

And when it has been brought home to us by experience how much may be entailed by this break-up, when we are marvelling in the blindness of our humanity, whether even the power of the Spirit as manifested in the Gospel of Christ, will be able to reconstruct out of the ruins a new fabric, moral and social, we still hear the same uncompromising command: "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root up, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to pull down, and to build, and to plant."

The solvent power of the Gospel must unhesitatingly be put into operation. The task of building up the new structure will be seen to in the Lord's good time. He has set us to build and to plant, as well as to throw down and to root up; and to faith the apparently

impossible is none the less within the range of His power.

But at present it must often be the case that sight can discern little of all this; that all except the breaking down and the plucking up must be left to be accepted on faith.

And then every missionary knows how the voice of the Tempter comes in.

The path of the true preacher of the Gospel is, like his Master's, the path of the Cross. Disappointments innumerable confront him. He knows that in the eyes of the Indian world he is regarded as a simple fanatic for persevering in a task which seems so hopeless; that the bulk of professing Christians about him are indifferent, or worse than indifferent to the conversion of the heathen to Christ. So far as he is regarded as a philanthropist, so far as his work is educational or is confined to the relief of human suffering, so far, exactly, and no farther does society recognise it and believe in it. But inasmuch as he would bring men to Christ, would fulfil his mission as a preacher of the Gospel, they disbelieve in him and look askance at his work.

First, then, there spreads out before his eyes the possibility of escaping from the Cross. Let him abandon his lofty vocation as a preacher of Jesus Christ and Him crucified; let him only accept the lower standard of a philanthropist and a teacher of youth, and the offence of the Cross will cease. He will no longer be sneered at as a fanatic, no longer be disappointed as an evangelist. And then all the strong points of Hindooism begin to be spread out before his eyes. Let the people be left in the system which has taught them so much that is good. Let the higher morality of the Gospel be engrafted on the virtues of heathenism, and then what may not be looked for in the way of an easy, peaceful triumph? All hindrances from prejudice will be avoided. The antiquated notion of conversion once fairly put out of the question, the reward of our liberality shall be that we shall figure as the moral benefactors of a people who could be elevated as Hindoos, though they resented any attempt to make them Christians.

"*All these things will I give thee.*" So sounds

the voice in our own ears, as in those of our Master of old. All these things—escape from the scandal of the Cross, acceptance in the eyes of the world, influence, easy self-pleasing, and, as it appears, great benefit to others.

And the condition? that, too, is the same: "*If thou wilt fall down and worship me.*" The offer and the condition are the same: God forbid that the answer should be different. God help us to be true to our Saviour, and to reply with: "*Get thee behind me.*"

To one who thus desires to be true, the offer of an escape from the Cross secures its own rejection on the spot. If our work were not scouted by the world we should have cause to distrust it indeed.

And as to the question of results, with that we have nothing to do. Our command is to preach Jesus Christ: all else is in higher Hands.

We have, I say, to preach Jesus Christ. If it were matter of propagating a system, we might listen to some other suggestion, might pause and ask whether a system which is indigenous might not work better than one which is imported.

But it is a Person, not a system, that we preach. Ask us to substitute something else for our Master, and then you touch the apple of our eye.

Tell us any other name under heaven whereby we can be saved from our sins, and then we will substitute for the Gospel any system which will commend itself to Hindoos.

But while Jesus is to us and to all men a personal Saviour from sin, though we be set to pluck up and to throw down, we still will go to all to whom He sends us, and all that He puts in our mouths, by the help of the Lord we will preach.

ON GAMBLERS AND GAMBLING.

And the lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely; for the children of this world are in their generation, wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.—*St. Luke* xvi. 8, 9.

THE parable of which this is the application is one of the most difficult in the Gospels.

A wasteful bailiff, on the point of being dismissed, is anxious about his living for the future, so he determines, before the fatal day, to bind his master's debtors to himself by engaging them in a fraud on the common enemy. Thus he secures an asylum for himself against the time when he shall be thrown upon the world. And we are told that his master commended him; said, doubtless, that he understood his own interests,

however he might have dealt with his employer's. Our Lord Himself points a moral by his astuteness, bids us copy the effectiveness of the proceeding whatever we may think of its morality. Here is a man, He said in effect, who knew how to make the most of his opportunities.

He handled the mammon of unrighteousness, the money which so often leads men wrong, so as to secure himself a home and a welcome before he should be thrown upon the world. Quite true, the means were immoral, but nobody can gainsay their effectiveness. Quite true, the end was more than questionable, but, such as it was, he secured it. The means which he used unscrupulously, Christians are to employ conscientiously. The end which he gained in this world we are to aim at securing in the next. We are to see to it that we in our own way are as effective as he was in his. He used money unscrupulously to secure himself a welcome in this world. We must use it conscientiously and charitably, to secure ourselves a welcome in the next; must "make

friends to ourselves," our Lord says, "by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when we fail," pass away from this world, those friends, made by means of our money, may be waiting to welcome us beyond the grave, "to receive us into everlasting habitations."

I know well that the explanation which I have given you cannot claim any freedom from difficulties, but at least it is consistent with itself, and it points a moral, and that a very direct one. If I do not stop to justify it in detail, but ask you to accept it for the present as the basis of a practical lesson, I assure you that it has not been adopted except on a most careful summing up of the conclusions of trustworthy commentators.

The most obvious application of the parable is that which connects it with alms-giving; I would lead you in quite another direction, to a subject too much needed, I am afraid. "Make to yourselves friends," said Jesus Christ, "by means of the mammon of unrighteousness," use the money which leads people astray, so as to make friends and not enemies by means of it.

There is one way of using our money which is more effectual for making enemies than for making friends, and which, if it ever help us to make friends, will ally us with men of the wrong sort. And it is on this that I wish to speak to you this evening—on using money to add excitement to life by staking perhaps more than we can afford, on some chance which lies beyond our control; on staking our money against our neighbour's in the hope that we may win his and keep our own—in a word, I am going to preach upon betting.

I must begin then, by acknowledging the broad distinction which every man's common-sense must have drawn between betting where the stakes are merely nominal, and betting for appreciable sums of money. I hold even the first to be undesirable, but I should prejudice you against all which is to follow, were I not to acknowledge at starting, that while high play is intensely objectionable, trifling stakes are at the worst undesirable.

I only speak of such betting at all because its prevalence among right-minded men creates a

very palpable difficulty in condemning higher play as one ought.

A young man says in perfect good faith that he cannot see that such play can hurt anybody, and that it would be presumptuous in him to condemn it, lest he should sit in judgment on better men than himself. And then he finds himself in a practical difficulty, because he cannot see where to make a distinction. He acquits the harmless, nominal stake for which estimable men often play. And then when he is face to face with real gamblers, with men who in the heartlessness of their selfishness would win the last coin in a man's purse, would drive him into selling his commission, or possibly into cheating his tradesmen, to pay what are called his debts of honour, then, I say, he is asked by acquaintances, or challenged by his own love of pleasure to prove that there is any distinction between this and mere nominal betting.

I say, then, that all betting is undesirable. And in saying so, I will put the best case that can be imagined, so as to make certain that the question be fairly stated. A party of friends,

we will suppose, have sat down to play a game which is worth playing for its own sake. They know that they will all play it better if some trifle is staked upon the cards, just to secure that each is bound to his partner to beware of careless play. The stakes are fixed low to begin with, and the chances of the game are so even that probably, when they rise from the table, the sum which will change hands will be but nominal. Now you ask whether in such a case as this any fault can be found with what is done. You point, it may be, to the players. Not one of them has a stain upon his honour; not one of them would do a heartless thing; you cannot think that they live for excitement to the prejudice of their duties in life. The sole meaning of the stakes for which they play is that they know they will play the better for having named them.

Now I grant that it would be nothing but fanaticism to say that in itself this was sinful, or to dream of condemning it harshly.

But I do say that for reasons which I shall show you, it were better that it should not be

done. I do say that though good men may do it, they would be better men still if they abstained from it.

For if they abstained from it on principle, they never would blur the sharp line which holds back a weak man from his ruin. If they said that they would not stake pence lest by doing so they should lead others to stake notes, that they would not stake what they can afford lest they should lead others to stake what they have not got; if they remembered that what is nominal to one man may be a real gain or loss to another, they would be acting out the great Christian principle of casting no stumbling-blocks before the weak. For, if you look at it, it is literally true that it is impossible to distinguish in principle between playing for small stakes and for large ones. And, moreover, it is impossible in practice to say what are small and what are large. You may have two men in the same regiment or the same ship, of whom one serves Her Majesty for the pure honour of it, while the other is dependent on his pay. What to one is a nominal stake is a real loss or gain to the other. In offer-

ing counsel to a young man fresh to life, it were very easy to give the general advice to shun betting in every degree. It is far from easy to counsel him effectually if you are obliged by the practice of good men to advise him to avoid it in one form, while you admit that it may be nearly harmless in another. He turns to you again and again with the same question, not asked in mere carping—how is it that if betting is hurtful, some of the best men at my club do it habitually? and if there is no harm in small stakes, then where is the line to be drawn? There is but one point at which it can be drawn effectually, the point which I have indicated already. True kindness and high Christian principle would draw it at abstaining altogether from what may be infinitely harmful. At the most it is but a pleasure to be sacrificed, a pleasure which begins and ends with itself, for which nobody was ever the better except by the mere enjoyment of the moment—and for that mere selfish enjoyment you risk leading men to their ruin.

And now let us pass on from this subject to

that on which I chiefly wish to speak to you—high play and how we ought to regard it. And be it observed that in speaking of high play, I include all betting transactions in which appreciable sums may change hands. To stake a sum whose loss will inconvenience you, to stake a sum which will embarrass the loser if you happen to be on the right side—this to all intents and purposes is high play.

And for any play which reaches this point, I say boldly that there is not a word to be said. It is wholly, it is irredeemably objectionable; it requires to be ruthlessly kept down by the uncompromising disapproval of good people.

We need but look at the motives which prompt it, to see that this is no exaggeration. Every person who bets for large sums, or for what are such in proportion to his means, must do so from one or both of two motives, each thoroughly objectionable itself, most pernicious when found in combination—the desire to win money from one's neighbours, and the desire to add excitement to life.

The first count, then, to be brought against

high play is that it is the very incarnation of selfishness, and that selfishness of a specially low type. Its motive is to transfer a sum of money from another man's pocket to your own. You may use no means which are admitted to be dishonourable, but there the fact remains. It is his, and you mean to make it yours—a truly noble and unselfish intention if we looked no farther than this! We shall have to look farther hereafter, but meanwhile, I confine myself to the mere selfishness. This intent to win other people's money begets a habit of inveterate selfishness, of total disregard for the good of others, of thinking for yourself as against them, which is subversive of all Christian principle.

The rule for the Christian's life with his neighbours is to be: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." The most honourable betting-man's rule is, and must be the exact opposite of all this. It must be—think, plan, scheme, do everything, in a word, except cheat, in the exclusive interests of self, and thereby to the

direct detriment of others. His gain is of necessity his neighbour's loss. Again I say, a worthy pursuit, if we declined to look farther than its selfishness!

But then we are obliged to look farther; to look, at least, at some kinds of betting from the point of view which Charles Kingsley put so strongly. This noble and generous intention of transferring your neighbour's money to your own pocket—may I ask how you intend to carry it out? You mean to do it by giving or taking odds which he believes to lie in his favour, and which you have made out to be in yours. In other words, you intend to over-reach him by all means not absolutely dishonourable, to avail yourself of private information to which he has been carefully denied access, to outwit him by your own superior cleverness, to do all which can turn the odds in your own favour, while he still believes them to be in his. And the excuse you give for so acting is that he does the like by you, that it is a thoroughly understood thing on both sides. The excuse is worthy of the pursuit—it is allowable to come as near as you dare to dis-

honourable dealing yourself, *because* by thus tampering with what is questionable, you encourage other people to do the same.

For the next count which I bring against gambling is that it tends to the steady obliteration of the distinction between honourable and dishonourable. The combination of greed and excitement of which its moral environment is made up tends constantly towards blunting the sense of honour.

When we hear of what are known as "turf scandals," we may none of us be bound to have an opinion upon the merits of the particular case. What concerns us as members of society, of a society which professes to be Christian, is that the relations of gentlemen with one another have reached a crisis which compels us to acknowledge that somewhere there has been a failure in straightforwardness. Why are these things a recurring source of scandal in connection with every kind of gambling? Do we find in other walks of good society that we are called to take our choice between two gentlemen each of whom we had regarded as a man

of honour, and to know that if we elect to acquit one of them, we thereby elect to condemn the other of some act of which we thought he was incapable?

A pursuit which causes dilemmas such as these stands self-condemned of being hopelessly demoralising; of having a tendency, steady and powerful, to blunt the fine edge of a man's honour.

And how, we may ask, could it be otherwise? Low selfishness and morbid excitement —a bracing atmosphere for any man's morals! But this is how the betting-man lives; these things are the very air that he breathes.

The last charge to be brought against gambling is written in letters of blood on the history of race-courses and gaming-tables. It is that the excitement which it maintains is fatal to all noble and Christian living. I do not merely allude to the horrors which startle us now and then from our complacency, when our eye catches a paragraph in the newspapers with the heading: "*Another suicide at Monte Carlo.*" We all acknowledge that the play which led to

this carried terrible moral consequences in its train. But what I would have you think of at present, is the scarcely less terrible demoralisation which stops short of such consequences as these. Where one victim was impelled to self-destruction, how many stopped short with mere ruin? Where a loser resorted to suicide, were winners in no way demoralised?

To winners and to losers alike, all moral distinctions become confused as the passion for excitement grows stronger. No tie, domestic or social, can stand against the wholesale deterioration which this terrible mental dram-drinking brings with it.

I do not say but that the same may be the case where the field is the Stock Exchange, not the gaming-table. But the one is the abuse of what is legitimate, the other begins and ends with what is evil.

It is not likely that any gamblers have come to hear me. I have been addressing my remarks to two classes, to those who might be tempted to become gamblers, though as yet they have not been led away, or at least

not to gamble habitually; and to those who can contribute in their measure, as some present may contribute not a little, to the education of public opinion on this question.

Is it your duty to society and to yourselves, is it your duty to those for whom Christ died, to encourage or to discountenance a practice against which the charges are so grave and so undeniable?

You cannot hold that excitement, for its own sake, is a desirable atmosphere for men to live in; nor that greed, with strong temptations to sharp practice, can promote the well-being of the community; least of all that the combination of the two can be anything but a plague-spot in the midst of us.

If you cannot but acknowledge that this is true, I would ask you to treat gamblers and gambling so as to show all the world what you think of them.

THE

CONFLUENCE OF TWO ETERNITIES.

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—*Philippians* iv. 13.

THERE are seasons when the word "opportunity" seems to acquire a new meaning for all of us; when we take in what is equally true always, that each moment of our waking lives brings us something, our employment of which leaves us different for all future time.

Such a season we are now passing through.* We may think of it, if we will, as a mere accident, a mere difference in the heading of our letters, that we have entered on a new year of our lives since we were last in our places for Sunday service. And in a sense I

* Preached on the first Sunday in 1887.

allow that there is no difference between the midnight which struck last Friday and the striking of any other midnight, or of any other hour of our lives. It is true of every moment which passes over us exactly as much as of that one, that it marks what has been called by a great writer, "the confluence of two eternities;" that what but one moment ago was a portion of the future for us to use has become a part of the irrevocable past, which we no longer have to use but to answer for. But, then, what is difficult to realise when we think of it in relation to two eternities becomes comparatively easy to grasp when we think of it in relation to two years. And so, since the good Providence of God has brought round one of those recurring reminders which bring home to us what we never can escape from, I invite you to dwell for a few minutes on the thought, ever new although so old, of how our characters are being formed for eternity by our use of every moment as it passes.

The first thought which I would ask you to dwell upon is this—what we are at this

moment is the result of all that we have ever been at every moment of our past lives.

Were there nothing else to make this a certainty, it would follow from the intimate relation which obtains between our bodily frame and the complex whole which we call our character. Every student of physiology will tell us that the condition of our every tissue to-day bears the traces, more or less perceptible, of everything that it has been called upon to go through from the moment when it came into being; that the perfection or the imperfection of every function is affected by the prudence or imprudence with which we have regulated it from childhood. If it were true, then, for no other reason that your character was dependent to-day on all that you have been in the past, it would be proved by the single consideration that your movements are controlled by the same brain in communication with the same nerves and muscles.

However firmly you may believe that your personality is something more than the mere sum total of your organism, it is impossible

not to believe that it is acted upon by your organism at every moment, that it depends upon the condition of that organism for the instrument through which it must act, for the "formula" through which it must express itself.

Very closely connected with this, so closely that it is only not identical, is the consideration of the ineradicable tendency for acts and for frames of mind to repeat themselves. In the midst of the jarring war of impulse we know that we have had it always in our power to exert the controlling force of our free will; that we could throw ourselves on the side of right or wrong, and that according to our decision would be the issue. But each time that we brought the issue to a conclusion, we left ourselves different from what we had been: the impulse for which we had decided did not only remain master of the field as regarded the individual contest, it retained the prestige of its victory, or it accepted the consequence of its defeat to a degree which swayed the balance in future combats.

And the mark of every one of those com-

bats, of the victories which you assigned to good or evil, is upon you to make up the chequered whole which we speak of as your character to-day. Earnestness or indifference, wildness or self-control, sloth or energy, purity or its dread opposite, each of these as it characterises us now is the result of the innumerable tiny touches which the action of the will in the past has laid upon the canvas of our inner being.

I repeat it, then, our character at this moment is the result of all that we have made ourselves in the innumerable moments of our past lives.

Our next thought is the complement of this: our future character will be the result of what it is still in our power to be now. We are now what we have made ourselves in the past. But the great factor in what we made ourselves in the past was not either impulse or circumstances; it was the way in which we regulated our impulses, and the way in which we dealt with our circumstances. Our impulses furnished the raw material; our

circumstances suggested the pattern; but that which worked out the result was the action or the acquiescence of our free-will. And, however the material may have deteriorated under the treatment to which it may have been subjected, we still remain masters of ourselves to work it out into new designs in the future. Nay, however it may have been improved in the past by being always wrought up in the right way, it requires still to be so treated from hour to hour as to retain the right bias which has been given it.

We are masters of ourselves at this moment, to give the bent to our character in the future, even although we may have acquiesced in times past in the tyranny of overmastering impulse. We must keep ourselves in hand for the future, however firmly we have dealt in the past with that which strove to master our will. Thank God, there can be no halting if the course is to be maintained in what is right, no possibility of saying in this world that the discipline is ever complete, that the victory is finally won, that the necessity for exertion

has ceased, that we may relax that striving against evil, that we may intermit that straining after good, which alone give nobility to life. And, thank God yet more for this, there need be no despairing acquiescence in a slavery, how abject soever, to even the most overgrown impulses indulged into monstrosity by acquiescence.

If we will to become superior to evil, the grace of God which arouses the desire will furnish also the power to give effect to it.

But then, third, we must be in earnest in desiring it if we are truly to become master of ourselves; we must be in earnest both in general and in detail. If we are not in earnest in the whole purpose by which we set ourselves to become what we aspire to, no languid, half-hearted wish for it will ever effect the result. So many people *wish* that they were different without advancing any farther, because to wish for a thing and steadfastly to purpose it are two quite different matters. We *wish* to live the life of the righteous as Balaam wished to die his death.

Or perhaps we do not wish to live it, for that would mean exertion and self-denial; we rather perhaps wish that we did live it, or that there was something in us that would live it. And wishing such as this goes for nothing when it comes to the modification of a single habit, not to say to the alteration of a whole life. When you will it as you willed what you most longed for in the fiercest moment of any passion; when you will it as you willed to escape at the moment when your life was in the greatest peril; when you will it, as you will wish that you had willed it, should you finally learn that it is too late—when you do these, you will begin to attain it, because your heart will have been thrown into the endeavour.

And what you will in a fervid intention, you must carry through in detailed strivings not less strenuous. There is no such thing as a real will to do right except so far as it asserts itself continually not in willing alone but in doing.

"Ay, there's the rub!" you will say. Yes, there indeed, my friend. Have you ever taken in the full energy of that tremendous expression

of St. Paul's when he speaks of his contest with his lower self? "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection"—so it runs in the authorised version. What he said when you turn to the original, was "I beat my body black* and blue, and lead it the life of a slave." When we take ourselves in hand in this style, then it is that victory smiles in front of us.

It is worth while thus to take yourself in hand, for, fourth, you are forming yourself for eternity.

People think much of *where* they are to be, when they speculate on the life beyond the grave. They harp constantly upon how God is to treat them, or of how they think He ought to treat them. Let us think now not of *where* we shall be, but simply about *what* we shall be; not about how God will treat us, but about what we are making ourselves.

For as certainly as there is a future life, so surely are we training ourselves for it; as certainly as it will be ordered by Almighty God, so surely will His ordering of it be just what we ourselves have rendered possible. We con-

* 1 Cor. ix. 27. ὑπωπιάζω μου τὸ σῶμα καὶ δουλαγωγῶ.

stitute our own condition: we *are* our own hell or our own heaven, and that eternally. The final state is but the ultimate development of all that we make ourselves here. Perdition is nothing else, when we come to look at it, than what is called in the grave speech of Scotland, a being eternally "left to ourselves." Salvation, if we look at it, is nothing else than being finally taken out of ourselves, and into the new self which is Christ.

For to that, lastly, all else has been working up: our power to mould ourselves now is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ through the efficacy of the Indwelling Spirit.

Apart from this my words had been mere mockery. I am addressing some in whom the tyranny of evil habit, or the inveteracy of base acquiescence, or the ingrained inertness of long indifference had undone the very capacity for endeavour if the entering on it depended upon themselves.

"Apart from Me ye can do nothing"—"I can do all things in Christ which strengtheneth me." There we have the two poles of the great anti-

thesis between which the life of Christians is lived.

It is true of the strongest as of the weakest, of the most steadfast as well as of the most enervated, that apart from Christ we can do nothing. It is true of the weakest as of the strongest, of the prodigal after years of far wandering, as of the son who can say of himself that he has never transgressed the home commandments, that we "can do all things in Christ enabling us." Indeed, the paradox goes farther than that: not only are the weak strong in Him, they are strong through the very knowledge of their weakness, through the admission that they can do nothing of themselves. "When I am weak, then I am strong," said the same writer who said that "in Christ enabling him" he could do all things.

To come to Him with the acknowledgment of weakness is to have established a claim upon His strength. For nothing can exclude us from participation of it except to suppose that we can do without it.

To that strength there are no impossibilities.

"I can do all things in Christ enabling me." Being at this moment the creature of my own past, bearing the scars of innumerable conflicts in which I may have been worsted by evil; worse still, being unused to contest with it a mastery established by acquiescence, I may be made a new creature in Him, with new aims, new ideals, new hopes, hopes which carry their own realisation because they themselves are divine. Carrying about with me as part of my present being what I have been at every past moment, having a nature the continuity of whose existence gives me something of the eternity of God Himself—so that my past is in one sense not past but ever present, present not only to haunt me with memories but to live in the secret springs of my every action—I may yet become possessed of a new self to which old things shall have passed away, in which God shall make all things new. The present moment which, viewed in the light of nature, is but the goal, the summing-up of what preceded it, may become when grace shall work upon it, the point of departure for all that shall come after it.

The old scars, it is true, will be upon me; the old weaknesses will haunt and distress me "Wherein a man hath sinned, therein shall he suffer," may be true with an appalling reality even in lives whose whole scope has been altered by the miracles of converting grace. But then, if God use but for chastisement the things which would have been for our condemnation, if He do but turn into bitterness what otherwise had been hideously sweet to us, then the ultimate miracle of His love as regards a sinner's life in this world shall be that the very memories of his sins shall drive him closer to the side of his Saviour, that the consciousness of his clinging infirmity shall but make him the more humble believer. The thought of all that we have been the consciousness of all that we might be, shall but make the Grace of God more indispensable, shall make it less possible to forsake Him and to abandon ourselves to that which we so loathe.

Be it ours then, at the beginning of this New Year, to face fairly these two great truths, the truth of nature and the truth of grace; the truth of nature that all that we have been lives in us

and makes our present self, the truth of grace that all that Christ is can become ours to form a new self within us.

There is none of us that has not in his old self some presence from which he fain would escape, some deficiency which he fain would have supplied. There is only one escape from that presence, there is only one supply for that deficiency, the new creation vouchsafed to us in Christ Jesus, to be assimilated if as yet it be not there, to be developed if by His grace we have received it.

"Let us put off" then, with a new determination, "the old man which is corrupt;" let us put on, with a new energy of assimilation, "the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

A LIVING BELIEF THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost.—1 *Corinthians* xii. 3.

A LIVING and adequate belief can never have been otherwise than difficult. To sustain the soul at the level of heavenly things, to endure as seeing Him who is invisible, to conquer the desire of present pleasure by grasping the reality of the Unseen—these are tasks which no assurance of faith can ever have rendered easy to the believer. Yet that faith is not worthy of the name which does not entail perseverance in such a course. If it be truly the evidence of things hoped for, the substantial realisation of things unseen, then it must lead us to act out the realisation, to aim at the ful-

filment of the hope. Such resistance to the tyranny of sense must always be difficult of attainment so long as the things that are eternal are unseen, and the things which pass away are before our eyes. We are apt to think that perhaps we should have found them easy had we lived in days when the acceptance of Christianity came to people as a matter of course. The real difference between those days and our own does not lie in the presence of difficulties but in the point at which the difficulties come in. It may once have been easy to believe, in the sense in which those persons believe who acquiesce with a languid acceptance, in a system which for practical purposes never makes any demand upon their lives. It never was easy to have a faith, if by faith we mean an apprehension of the Unseen which makes its claims upon conduct and upon heart more imperious than those of the visible. It was this faith that St. Paul had before him when he said that it was only by the assistance of the Holy Spirit that Jesus can be acknowledged as Lord. He was speaking of the higher conviction which

rises through intellectual persuasion to living in the faith of the Unseen.

The attainment of such conviction, being always a supernatural process, requires supernatural assistance in one age as well as in another. And the difference, to repeat it again, between our own age and some which preceded it, lies in the point where that assistance has to come in rather than in the need of receiving it somewhere. When acceptance of Christianity in the abstract was expected of one as a matter of course, then the point where such assistance was required was the reduction of the belief to right practice. When such acceptance is no longer universal, then the point at which the assistance is required may be that of the acceptance of Christianity as a system intellectually tenable. It is just there that, in an age like our own, the line of demarcation may come in to separate non-Christians from Christians, to mark off those who live for the world from those who try to live for God.

And that such will be increasingly the case we all know that there is much reason to be-

lieve. Within the memory of the older among us, a great change in that very direction has been steadily and progressively at work. The half-hearted professors of Christianity have tended steadily to range themselves on the other side, among those who reject it intellectually.

It may appear, then, that it would have been easier in other days to have acknowledged that Jesus is Lord. In reality it would have been just about as difficult as we find it in the present day; for acknowledging Jesus as Lord means sustaining our daily conversation at the level of the unseen and the supernatural, and the bare acceptance of a traditional system leaves that task just as difficult as ever. Nay, it is perhaps easier to live up to our faith when we have had to fight our way to it and so to make it our own. But without pressing this point any farther let us assume that for us of the nineteenth century the acceptance of Christian belief as a system intellectually tenable is the point at which, more than elsewhere, the dividing line is drawn; and then, in the light

of that assumption, let us see how the words of St. Paul have a special application to our case, when he says that only by the assistance of the Holy Spirit can Jesus be acknowledged as Lord.

How is it that the belief in revelation which once was a matter of course is a point at which now and among ourselves the great spiritual sifting seems to take place? I suppose it is that the range of the human mind is after all but a very limited range, and the more extensive our knowledge of the natural, the smaller is the field of our horizon which remains for the supernatural to occupy. And so with our farther insight into nature there has grown up a complete system of materialism which leaves no room for the belief in a God behind the working of the physical universe; nay, which leaves no room for the human spirit itself when we have traced out the physical antecedents of the subtlest of our mental operations. An event which was set down by our fathers to the direct intervention of Providence we are able in the present day to follow out into a long sequence

of physical antecedents which have surely and inevitably led up to it, we can forecast the probability of its recurrence and see what would hinder or promote it. God is placed so many stages farther back in the sequence of cause and effect; His place in the whole chain of causation is rendered so much less direct, as our short-sightedness thinks of directness, that we are in danger of losing sight of Him altogether as the originator and sustainer of the whole.

Then the notion of poetical justice as regulating the disposition of events, though it is one against which we have been cautioned by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, seems somehow more easily reconcilable with a moral order of things than the belief which is forced upon us now that the sequence of good and evil fortune, even in the instances which strike us most forcibly, is no proof that the prosperous are godly, or that the unfortunate have deserved to miss happiness.

Another point which we must not underrate is that a faith which has once been called in

question has, by the very fact, lost half of its *primâ facie* cogency. When once it has been breathed upon by doubt its character of inviolability has been lost, and that loss can never, never be recouped. A revelation, we all think at the first start, ought to carry its own evidence upon the face of it with a cogency so absolutely irresistible that to be propounded should be all one with being accepted. And then we have to learn by degrees that in a world where it is part of our discipline that we should live not by sight but by faith, this character of irresistible cogency is just what we are not to expect; we have to learn that it is of the essence of our discipline that we should accept upon its spiritual adequacy a system which, apart from that evidence, has no credentials of absolute demonstration to make its acceptance irresistible. This lesson we are called upon to learn as an essential element of our probation, but all the same it is none the less true that that lesson derives its disciplinary power from the very fact that this atmosphere of questioning makes acceptance a difficult

matter. It is less the individual difficulties than the fact that there are difficulties at all, which so staggers us when first it is realised.

Then, when the surroundings of unquestioning acceptance, of traditional and unhesitating submission drop away from the revelation of the Gospel, it is then that it becomes apparent to us as an axiom that our belief in it as intellectually tenable depends upon the spiritual atmosphere through which we habitually survey it.

If the unseen is to be real to us at all it must be close beyond the closeness of the visible. It is only by living up to its demands that we can maintain it at the level of reality. If Jesus be not a living presence communed with in the stillness of the heart, then the tones which speak outwardly to the ears will assuredly be louder than His voice. If our Saviour lives for us but in books, then the obtrusive presences of sense must surely crowd Him out from our attention. They press with a jostling importunity into the hearts that cherish Him most tenderly; and, alas! they have it all their own

way in those where He does not stand quite first. Live in Him and do all things as in His presence, and faith will become naturalised in your heart. Not only in the sphere of outward service, but in the tenderness of a true inner life, in the noble aspirations of devotion, you must seek Him and live in His presence. Your happiness must derive its brightest hues from the shining of His face upon your joys; the dark passages of your life in this world must leave something of tender recollection as times when His presence was your stay; prayer must not be a duty alone but a hanging on the looks of a loved Master. Your loves must be loved in Him; your very amusements must be compatible with the remembrance of Him; He must be the grand fact of all facts in the world around you and within you; the end of your duties, the sustainer of your infirmities, the lightener of your darkness, the hearer of your prayers. If in this way He be a reality to you, then the difficulty were not to believe. For Christianity, my friends, is a system which can only be understood from within, or rather it is

not so much a system, it is rather a Person and a life. Until you have entered into its realities; till you have lived it, if we think of it as a life; till you have loved it, if we think of it as a Person; till then its evidences as a system must remain a sealed book to your understanding. The evidences are there plain enough, it is you that want the faculty to apprehend them. And until it has been given you by God and received into your heart by pure faith, you must want it, whatever be your abilities.

You may say: Does not this beg the question? Am I not called upon by this way of putting it to accept what has got to be proved, and then to find the arguments for proving it?

I allow that the process were inadmissible in dealing with any other subject. But then God is not any other subject, and is not to be apprehended like any other. It makes no difference to the apprehension of any other whether the reasoner be a sinner or a saint. Where the understanding alone is in question, the moral attitude of the soul is indifferent. But where the subject is the Infinite

and the All Holy, and the reasoner is finite and sinful, there the province of the understanding is only this—to apprehend the bare indications which are vouchsafed as material for faith. The abyss of the Divine Nature lies before us; we are to plunge ourselves into a spiritual communion with it, to drink it in at every pore of our being. And then, when we know where to look for it, the eye of the understanding will perceive it. Until then, we go scanning the whole horizon, and declare that we cannot see it on any side; while, all the while, it rolls up to our feet, and we have but to immerse ourselves in its depth.

Augustine's is not the only spirit which has wearied itself over the insoluble paradox of the question, "Which comes first—to call upon God or to know Him?" which has questioned how God can be called upon except He first be known; and how, on the other hand, He can be known except He be called upon to reveal Himself. Nor, thank God, is Augustine's the only heart which has found the solution of the problem, insoluble by any process of

the intellect: "the faith, O Lord, which Thou has given me, *that* calleth upon Thee."

Do but live the Gospel perseveringly, and then you shall understand the Gospel. Take the Lord to be your salvation, and then He will make Himself your light.

And this, we are told in the text, can only be the work of the Holy Ghost. Light comes to sinners by love, and love is the work of the Holy Ghost; nay, love *is* the presence of the Holy Ghost shed abroad in the heart of man. You cannot call Jesus Lord except by God the Holy Ghost, because you cannot love Him aright save only as the Spirit makes you one with Him. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him; and by the sympathy which comes from such unity, by the interchange of mutual endearment, does there pass between the soul and its Redeemer that intercourse wherein knowledge of Him is arrived at.

Every soul which has lived for that union is a witness to the truth of what I say. It came to us by no merit of our own; it abides

with us through no grasp of our own. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, sustained from hour to hour by His own grace. In this knowledge that we cannot retain Him except by the power of the Holy Ghost, the soul which lives only for Him finds all its assurance of safety. Without that, it might presume and be lost; with that, it clings blindly and is safe.

If once we were to cease to treat faith as a purely supernatural gift, we should run into imminent danger of losing our faith altogether. For "no man can call Jesus" his "Lord except by" the power of "the Holy Ghost," because no man can keep Jesus in his heart save by being one spirit with Him. The only knowledge of Him which is independent of this is that indolent, nominal apprehension of Him which is not real knowledge of Him at all. To know Him in very deed to be Lord, we must know Him with the knowledge of the heart; and to know Him with the knowledge of the heart, we must be united to Him by God the Holy Ghost.

ENCOURAGEMENTS TO PRAYER.*

Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.—*Galatians* iv. 6.

IT must have struck you as I read out the text, that it contained a word which is foreign to the English language, that word Abba, by which we are told that the Spirit in our hearts addresses God. If you read the verse in the original Greek, you would find that it was equally foreign to that language. It belongs to the vernacular Aramaic spoken in Palestine by the Jews of our Lord's day. How did St. Paul come to introduce this foreign word into the text of his letter to the Galatians? It appears

* Preached at St. Paul's on the 4th Sunday after Trinity, 1888, and included in this volume at the kind request of the Very Rev. the Dean.

to me to have been a kind of "household word" among the early followers of Jesus Christ. Just as you find in so many home circles that there are certain words peculiar to the family, words which have grown up, it may be, out of the stammering speech of the children as they called each other by pet names in the nursery; but words which, whatever be their origin, are meaningless to any one outside, but full of sweet, tender associations for those who belong to the charmed circle; so it seems that this term of endearment was a kind of family word within the circle of the followers of the Crucified. Nor is it difficult to see how it became such. At the darkest moment of His earthly existence, when our Lord had gone apart from His favoured followers, and was praying alone in His agony, they could hear, as they sat near Him in the garden, that He called on His Father in heaven by the sweet title, "Abba Father," dear Father. And so it passed into a household word among His brethren. And when the Apostle tells us, as Christians, that we may call Almighty God "Abba Father;" nay, that the Spirit in our

persons so calls Him, the privilege which he holds out to us is just this: that in virtue of the sonship which belongs to us as members of God-made-man, we are entitled to approach our Heavenly Father with the very same term of endearment as rose naturally to the lips of His own Son when He prayed that the cup of anguish might pass from Him, so the will of His Father were still done.

Let me draw out one or two simple lessons which come to us from this thought of encouragement.

If the Spirit of God prays within us, and that in the very same endearing terms as were used by our Saviour Himself, then we need none of us hesitate to pray to God in words dictated by the sense of our own needs. Nay, if we are in earnest in our prayers, I think it is certain that we shall wish to put them up in words which come straight from our own hearts. We ought all to have forms of private prayer. But just as it was said by Dr. Pusey that every one who was very deeply in earnest would practically have his own set of questions by which to

examine his own conscience, so I think all who are in earnest in prayer will find that no forms drawn up by others will satisfy all their own needs. Just in proportion as their needs are deeply felt, they will find that the words to express them must be furnished from within, at the moment. No one else has had exactly the same temptations presented in just the same form; no one else has had exactly the same needs recurring in just the same combinations; no one else has known just the same falls, had to use the same means of recovery; no other soul of all the myriads in creation was called into being by God to fill just the same place in the world, with exactly the same characteristics; and therefore no words of any one else, be he the holiest and the most sympathetic of mankind, can meet the exact requirements of your soul in its most intimate communion with God. "Take with you words," then, of your own choosing, and be sure that what seems to you their inadequacy, is exactly what will plead for your requirements in the ears of your tender, loving Father.

But many feel that they can do this in their own prayers, when they are alone, pouring out their own needs, who would hesitate, who would say that it was impossible to pray thus with other people. Yet I think we little know what we lose if we never pray together in our own words. A husband with his wife, a parent with a child, a friend with a friend, would find that nothing in the spiritual life was more real, more comforting, more capable of drawing out the deepest sympathies, than the simple expression of common wants in the words which the moment suggests. I yield to none in my attachment at public worship to the grand, dignified, liturgical worship handed down through generations of Church people. I yield to none in the firmness of my belief that a congregation should not be left for its devotions to the capacities or to the changing moods of its minister. But a clergyman by the bedside of a sick person, a missioner consoling a penitent, any Christian holding intercourse with a brother about the deepest needs of the soul, must sometimes have recourse, I am sure, to the expres-

sion of the needs of that brother in words taught (may we not believe?) by the Holy Spirit, to suit the special exigencies of each case.

And yet we see people perpetually hindered by a kind of shyness and self-consciousness from praying extemporaneously with one another I remember a very touching instance of the length to which such feeling can go, in the narrative of a simple-hearted sailor recording the incidents of a shipwreck. The survivors drifted for days in an open boat before they were picked up by a passing ship; and their penman, describing what they went through, said: "We took it by turns all the time to put up a rough kind of a prayer to God." The poor man had, perhaps, never in his life tried to pray in his own words before other people; and terrible as was the extremity of their need, he felt for himself and his comrades that the words in which those needs had been expressed were all unworthy of the Majesty of the Creator to whom they had turned in their distress—"a rough kind of a prayer," he called it, though it had been

wrung from him by the sense of impending death. And "rough" we must all have felt that our prayers were when we had not only the sense that it was the Almighty to whom we were putting them up in our own words, but that fellow-men were listening and trying to follow them if so be their own deep needs might be embodied in them.

But, believe me, if the sense of their inadequacy prevent us from praying in our own words at moments when hearts are opened to one another in a sense of common dependency and common love, the loss to ourselves and to our dear ones will be greater than I can very well express.

But the difficulty that we have to contend with sometimes is not so much the inadequacy of our words as the failure to command any words at all. We kneel down, we clasp our hands, we shut our eyes, and there we remain before God, unable to find a single expression in which to express our necessities. And we are tempted to give up the endeavour, perhaps to be put off altogether from what seems so

unprofitable an exercise. Yet if we refuse to be thus diverted from our purpose, if we persevere in the mere attitude of prayer, in the mere attempt to concentrate ourselves upon the effort, we may be sure that the attempt in itself, that the spreading out of our needs in that silence is itself a prayer to God—is marked, and heard, and answered through the pleading of the Spirit in our hearts. The "Abba Father" goes up from the Spirit, and mingles itself with the intercessions of Jesus, because we have had the will to pray although we have not been able to frame one petition.

Let me tell you of a case which came before me, where a man prayed as good prayers as I ever heard of without being able to say one word. He was a godly private soldier, determined to make a stand for Jesus Christ amidst the prevailing ungodliness of his barrack-room. He knew of only one way of doing it which would satisfy his lately aroused conscience—to kneel down and say his prayers before his comrades as he went to bed each night. No sooner, he said, was he on his knees, in the early days

of his testimony, than a storm of oaths and blasphemy began to go up all around him. He was cursed, he was hooted, he was pelted; and night after night while this went on, he would rise from his knees after a few minutes, unable to say in his inmost heart that he had uttered one word of prayer, that he had done anything but make a stand for the principle. Yet I think that many prayers which we should call eloquent were less real, less certain of being heard, than the prayers that this simple man prayed. The bending of his knees was a prayer; the clasping of his hands was a prayer; the shutting of his eyes was a prayer, although no one articulate word might be uttered. Surely here the Abba Father of the Spirit "cried mightily" to God in the heart of His child.

There is a prayer well known to every one of us, the oldest form of which expressed this truth exactly. The "Collect for Purity" in our Communion Office runs thus in the original Latin—is used thus in the Latin Church at this day: "Almighty God, unto whom all

hearts be open, and unto whom every desire speaketh," *omnis voluntas loquitur*. I am not sure that the change in the English version is in this case a change for the better. At any rate, let the older Latin form bear its testimony to us English Christians, that the honest desires of a child's heart can speak in the ears of his heavenly Father without his having found words to convey them; that the Spirit can still cry Abba Father, though His teaching has not reached in our hearts the point at which we can put it into words.

But, one will say, the hindrance to my prayers is often not so much want of words, as want even of the desire to find words; I cannot pray because I cannot long to pray. I know that prayer is essential to my soul, and, at bottom, I believe I am not indifferent, but all desire after intercourse with God seems sometimes to be dried up out of my spirit.

For you, too, the pleading of the Spirit, the Abba Father uttered within you, will avail to plead with God, and in God's good time to teach you how to pray. You can at least

go so far as to say that you wish that you did wish to pray. And that wish to wish to do right, is enough for the Spirit of God; for it is the evidence that the grace of your baptism, that the presence and pleading of the Spirit have not been completely driven away by any coldness, or carelessness, or sin by which your heart has been rendered unfit for Him. That God is in your thoughts at all, is sure evidence that you still have some title to be called a child of God. And if, in any sense and in any degree, you can claim to be the child of God, you have exactly the same claim as the greatest saint upon the intercessory office of the Holy Spirit. It is simply as a child of God, adopted through Christ, and sanctified through the Holy Spirit, that the most saintly of the children of Adam has a right to draw near to the Throne, to claim the pleading of the Holy Spirit. And if you are a child of God, you have that title in yourself. You have but to make the attempt; but to testify by an effort to pray that you are not indifferent to your

great privilege, and on the instant you enlist on your behalf the "unutterable groanings" of the Holy Spirit whereby He pleads for you to God. And you are taught not only that He pleads *for* you, but that He pleads *in* you—pleads in your person. That effort by which I said but now that you enlisted His pleading on your behalf, is itself His work in you; it was grace, not nature, that prayed. Once unite yourself with Him in that effort, once allow Him to agonise within you in an effort to reach out after God, and the lost power of desiring your God shall be brought back by His working within you.

If you tried to take your part but now in the hymns in which we praised Almighty God, you must have found that your poor effort after a note acquired a power which you never knew to belong to it, because the air of the Cathedral around you was all vibrating, and all vocal with song. And so it is with our poor efforts after prayer. The atmosphere around the Throne of Almighty God is all vibrating, and all vocal with prayer, with the

prayer of the Holy Spirit in God's children, with the intercessions of the Lamb upon the Throne, with the prayers which the Church Militant and the Church Expectant send up day and night to the Lord of all. Blend your voice, all unpractised though it be, with the intercessions of the Blessed Persons within the Godhead, and with the prayers of the redeemed and of the faithful, and you shall find that you too, in your own measure, shall learn to call God Abba Father.

THE

STANDARD OF MORAL PROPORTION.

What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?—*St. Matthew* xvi. 26.

IN one of the most remarkable poems of our century, there is put into the mouth of a passing stranger a description of a supposed interview at Bethany with Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead. And the one thing which the half-sceptical stranger carries away as the final impression of his strange acquaintance, is, that the man has lost his sense of proportion between the great and the little things of life; that the things which seem trivial to other people have an inexplicable importance to him; that the

issues on which others hang trembling, seem to him hardly worth a passing thought.

> The man is witless of the size, the sum,
> The value in proportion of all things,
> Or whether it be little or be much.
> Should his child sicken unto death, why look
> For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness
> Or pretermission of the daily craft?
> While a word, gesture, glance from that same child
> At play or in the school, or laid asleep,
> Will startle him to an agony of fear.

To the man who had seen within the veil, things here derived their only importance from their bearing on what shall be hereafter.

I have known one or two people in my life—the late Dr. Pusey was one of them—to whom it seemed to have been granted, here and now, to take in all the bearings of things as though they, too, had seen for themselves; as though God and the things of the other world were far more real, more truly present to their minds, than the surroundings and the experiences of the present. You felt when you came into their presence, that the relative values of all objects were settled in their estimation by a different

standard of proportion from that which obtained with other people, even with most of those who were deeply in earnest. Their one thought about anything which appealed to them was: what would be its ultimate bearing on the condition of souls before God? You could not dazzle them with any results which might accrue to themselves or others here and now. They asked: "What difference will it make in the great Day?" Nothing seemed to them of minor importance if it had a bearing on the spiritual interests which they remembered were one day to be all in all.

They were men, as it seemed, of one idea, and that idea was of what would please God, would make us what He would have us to eternity. Now it is true that the minds which are thus dominated by "Infinite, imminent eternity," may, in a sense, lack the instinct of proportion. But it is true in that sense alone in which "the children of this world are" often, "in their generation, wiser than the children of light," namely, that the worldly-wise have a more adequate conception of how to bring themselves

to bear upon their contemporaries. It is not that the more illuminated souls overestimate the difference in importance between the claims of the seen and of the Unseen. But they fail to appreciate the utter blindness of the people with whom they come in daily contact. It is all so intensely real to themselves that they get the credit of being dreamy enthusiasts, for assuming that things need but be stated in the light in which they see them themselves, in order to be estimated aright by a world which, alas! sees very differently. Throughout the poem which I quoted to begin with, there runs a vein of subtle "irony," of under-meaning made apparent to the reader, how the supposed madman with his tale of the other world, is the one being who has attained to see all things in their proper and ultimate proportions. And do we not see the same vein of strange irony pervading the daily life which surrounds us—the only men to whom the things of the present world have been dwarfed into their proper unimportance, regarded as enthusiasts and dreamers, not because they are not infinitely clearer sighted than those who

are called practical men, but because they have become incapable of making allowances for the half-light in which other people live? Yet all the while it is the shrewd, the so-called practical, whose wisdom is so utterly to seek.

Now as one who is not too highly gifted to have kept touch with the common estimates around him; as one who sees only too plainly the vast influence which the seen and the immediate can exercise on our sense of proportion; as one to whom this world is very sweet, valued simply for the humour and the pathos which lie so close together in its intercourse; as one whom the clinging arms of little children hold fast to the tender joys of earthly living, I would try and help you this evening, my friends, to redress some of the many false estimates which beset our conceptions of things.

And first, of the exaggerated value which we attach to the esteem of our fellow-men as compared with our standing before God. I do not speak of any cringing to society, of the dirty ways and the degrading compliances by which people ingratiate themselves with social leaders.

I speak of that which is healthy in itself if only it be tempered by higher thoughts, of our desire to stand well with those about us, to be acceptable, to be liked, to be treated kindly. All these things make a very real difference not only to our comfort but to our self-respect. They are mixed up very intimately indeed with our use of our social opportunities, with filling our place in the world as we feel that it ought to be filled.

Yet how exaggerated is the room which they occupy in the endeavours and the aspirations of most of us! When a stand has to be made in society for what we know to be a matter of principle; when we know that disapproval should be shown of what lowers the tone of those about us; when a lead has to be taken in what is good, to the disregard of that which is merely popular; then sometimes one has to ask with surprise whether there is no one who can rise to the point of view which regards simply what is pleasing to God, what is dictated by the highest considerations, what will tell as a spiritual power. "It would be too marked," we all

say: "people would stare;" they would think that we were setting up a standard which would condemn better Christians than ourselves.

Now, after all, does it matter so very much whether we have conformed with a scrupulous exactness to the conventionalities of the people around us? Suppose it were actually to ensue that people thought twice before they bowed to us in the street. Suppose we found that because we had done what was right the little groups in some drawing-room full of people closed together, instead of genially opening out, when it was seen that we intended to draw near. We ought to ask, under such circumstances, no doubt, how far our want of taste or of common-sense may have caused that our good should be evil spoken of. We ought earnestly to endeavour for the future so to act as to make our principles acceptable. But could we really feel a regret or a misgiving for having fearlessly chosen what was right? Not, I think, if we are bearing in mind that it matters more how we stand before God than how acceptable we are to our fellow-men.

When "the naked soul stands shivering before its Judge," there will be little thought how its acts or its abstentions commend themselves to society in the world. It will matter very much to us in that day whether we have helped to be the salt of the world, to preserve the stagnant waters of social feeling from growing putrid with the corruptions of a false standard. It will make a difference to our standing in God's kingdom, to say nothing of its affecting our right to enter it, whether our influence on the people about us has been one of elevation or of depression, whether our righteousness has or has not "exceeded the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees;" whether we have made the awfulness of goodness to be felt, or have conformed to low conventional standards; whether we have broken the least of God's commandments, and by our practice taught others to break it. Apart from this, we shall care very little how far we have been popular or the opposite. Did we please men?—we shall only ask this in so far as by pleasing them we could make them better. Did we please God?—will

be the question of questions, alone worth asking or answering.

Let me go on to another false estimate, another blank in our sense of proportion—our valuation of enjoyment in life in comparison with preparedness for death. We have heard, it may be, of a man who was showing his new house to a visitor. The host was a very tall man, and it struck him that his guest looked very closely at the size and conformation of his staircase.

"What are you looking at so attentively?" he asked.

"I was just wondering," was the reply of the visitor, "whether it was wide enough for bringing down your coffin."

Is it not true that we all think of this world very much as that man thought of his new house—much more as a place to live in than as a place to die in? And yet it may be that the latter estimate were worth, at any rate, a place beside the other. For things may present themselves very differently when we look back at them from that supreme moment. Or, at any

rate, if they do not *look* different, their true proportions will matter more to us than we think for. Enjoyment will be valuable to us then exactly as it has conduced to something higher.

For in what lies the true value of enjoyment? Is it not simply in the zest which it gives to the due performance of that which is required of us by our duties to God and to our fellows? And if we think of it in any other light, are we not in danger of forgetting altogether the true value and proportion of things? If we pursue it for its own sake alone, we rate the bloom upon the surface of the fruit more highly than its power to sustain life. To do all that is given us to do as well as we can possibly do it; to bring all that we have done otherwise than this to be cleansed in the precious Blood that was shed for us; to offer all that we have feebly done aright to be accepted through the merits of our Saviour—is not this the great work of every life, to the making or the marring of which all minor considerations do but tend? And what will it matter when we come to the end, except that we should be

able to say truly that these are the things for which we lived?

But you will ask, has enjoyment, then, no place? Is it a matter of no importance whatever whether our course through the years that we spend here has been run with any pleasure or not? It has a place, and a place of great importance; but that place is somewhat different, I think, from what most of us are disposed to assign to it. It has a place, else our craving to attain to it had been implanted in vain by the All-wise. But what makes the whole difference is this—whether we think of it as an end in itself, or whether we treat it as a means, a condition, for the attainment of other ends which lie beyond it. It is the conversion of means into ends, of mere conditions into substantive objects, which mars half the lives that I know. And this is what we do every day if we live for enjoyment for its own sake. The desire for enjoyment is implanted that the things which are worth pursuing for their own sake may be carried out with the greater perfection. Enjoyment is the result of a perfect

harmony between our powers and the objects of their exercise. It is held out as an inducement to our weakness to arouse itself and aim at perfection. And it matters very much whether we enjoy ourselves; because so far as we are attaining to perfection in each act which is really worth doing, so far will enjoyment result from it. It matters very much whether we enjoy ourselves; because the enjoyment which comes in recreation is what braces us to exert ourselves afresh. But enjoyment as the crown of perfection is one thing, and enjoyment as the end of existence is another; enjoyment pursued as a recreation to fit us for serious employment is different from amusement and its enjoyment as the be-all and the end-all of life. And what will matter when we give in our account is how far the capacity for enjoyment has been used to keep our powers at their highest level. What we have enjoyed for the sake of enjoying it, will then be of infinitesimal importance; while it will matter quite infinitely to us to be able to answer well for our opportunities.

The enjoyment which shall have conduced to this end will then be gain, and gain of the highest kind; of all other enjoyment whatsoever we shall make but very little account.

And do not all the really highest enjoyments tell on every part of our character, for expansion, for deepening, nay, for chastening? What is there which is really worth enjoying in nature, in literature, in art, in social life, or in legitimate amusement, which does not leave us larger and stronger, more capable of doing our duty, more able to sympathise with all humanity? If we correct our conceptions of enjoyment so as only to care very deeply about those pleasures which conduce to such ends, we shall find them fall naturally into line with all that is noblest in our lives; we shall value them, not simply for their own sakes, but for all that they are capable of making us. Taken thus, there is no opposition between the claims of enjoyment and of duty, between enjoyment and preparedness for death. Such enjoyment will conduce to that preparedness, for it tells with an intense degree

of power on our approximation to the ideal set before us.

Very poor, very halting, alas! must such approximation ever be; all marred, and blurred, and distorted by wilfulness, and carelessness, and sin. But still, if it be the Christ who is within us, struggling forth to express Himself in our lives; if it be the working of God the Holy Ghost, transforming the waywardness of nature into subjection to the Gospel of Jesus Christ; if the work of nature have been cleansed and forgiven; if the work of grace be present and progressive, then there is true preparedness for death, through the merits of Him who died for us.

May we be enabled so to live for this ideal, that all else may be trifling compared with it; that compared with being pleasing to God we may reck little of being esteemed among men; that we may think of all enjoyment in life just according as it promotes, or as it hinders, the consummation of preparedness for death.

DEBT.

Owe no man anything, but to love one another.—*Romans* xiii. 8.

THE obligations incumbent upon a Christian arrange themselves here under two groups. First come those which can be marked off with rule and line; those enumerated in the verses which precede; the debts which we owe to those around us, whether those which can be discharged in hard cash, or our debts to a man's person and reputation, to his social or his official position. It is this class which is kept prominently in view throughout the practical exhortations of the passage. Yet the Apostle feels, as every teacher must feel who speaks to his fellow-men in Christ's name, that when he has exhorted them to acquit themselves towards their neighbours of every-

thing which can be claimed as of right, there remains a still higher obligation, of which we are never to suppose that we can be quit. A heathen must render people their dues so far as they can be brought home to him as debts. A Christian owes another grand debt, of which he never can be permanently acquitted so long as there are souls for whom Christ died; a debt, the payment of which does not leave us less indebted than before; a debt, the payment of which blesses giver and receiver alike — the debt of love to all men. It was impossible, I say, for a Christian teacher to exhort people to discharge their obligations without reminding them that actual obligation, or what the world takes count of as such, forms, perhaps, the smallest portion of what Christians owe to their fellows. Redeemed by the sacrifice of the Cross, discharged of the one crushing debt which they never could pay to their God, they are bound to do all that they can to repay to those whom God loves the obligation which forgiveness imposes. Made members of the deified Humanity which embraces the whole

world in its kinship, they are pledged to an universal affection as wide as that of their Master.

Still the Apostle recognises distinctly that there are duties, the nature of whose obligation is narrower and more specific than this; that there are debts to be discharged by every one of us which are not left merely to be dealt with by the charity which includes all men in its scope. And of these he distinctly lays down that we are to discharge ourselves of them as obligations: "Render therefore to all their dues." "Owe no man anything." To one of these more specific obligations, to the one of them which we specially associate with the word which is applied to them all, let our thoughts be directed for a little. "Owe no man *anything*," says the Apostle. Least of all, then, ought we to owe *money* to any one without knowing how we are to pay it.

Indebtedness is of more than one kind. There are debts incurred in the course of business, and there are debts incurred in social life. It is of the latter kind alone that I

am going to speak. Commercial honesty and dishonesty would furnish matter for a separate discourse, nor have I the technical knowledge to enable me to deliver myself on such a subject. I speak then of the debts which may be contracted over our personal or our family expenditure.

And here, again, there is one class of debts which I wish to dismiss to begin with. There are embarrassments entailing no culpability because they have been absolutely inevitable. They may have been contracted through the dishonesty of others, so that the debtor is only to blame for having trusted people too indiscriminately; or they may have arisen through sudden illness in a family, when perhaps the ordinary income had been barely sufficient for daily needs; or it sometimes happens that a servant of Government is moved from one station to another, when perhaps he has hardly recovered himself after the expenses which attended former transfers.

If such debts need not have been incurred but for previous improvidence or mismanage-

ment, then of course people are responsible for them just as far as it was in their power to have done better. But there are debts, as the strictest must acknowledge, which no forethought could possibly have averted. Let such be held excluded, to begin with, from all that I think it necessary to say about the moral culpability of indebtedness. But let me make one remark in dismissing them—that debts which have been honestly contracted may be very dishonestly acquiesced in; that to grow accustomed to owing money to any one is something very fatal to a high standard; that unless we are denying ourselves rigidly to pay off the most innocent of debts, they will induce a sad habit of degeneracy which may be fatal to all conscientiousness. A man who can enjoy life while he owes money is a man who has degenerated through his misfortunes.

But putting inevitable embarrassments on one side, and confining ourselves to those which are culpable, I propose to approach the subject as follows. We will look first at the causes

of debt, and the means of avoiding embarrassment. We will glance next at the consequences which follow it, and the contrast between indebtedness and freedom. I think that when these have been drawn out, there will be no need of any further appeal to induce you to recognise its disgracefulness: we can none of us have anything to urge for that which has so pitiful an origin, and which leads to results so contemptible. And let me say about all which is to follow that it is to no mere worldly prudence that I appeal. I speak of the moral and spiritual disasters which are inseparable from recklessness about money.

The causes of culpable indebtedness are, I suppose, roughly speaking, three in number—carelessness, self-indulgence, and ostentation. And the means of avoiding it correspond to them—forethought, self-denial, and simplicity. But perhaps the most fatal cause of all is a weakness which includes those three faults, with a dash of moral cowardice superadded—mere unwillingness to be different from other people.

People think that a certain style of living is expected in the circle in which they move, and in that style, accordingly, they live, though they know that they cannot afford it. This appears to be nothing but a weakness, yet it is a weakness which, fairly looked into, combines all the three faults which I have mentioned. They are too improvident to calculate properly what they can and what they cannot afford; too self-indulgent to encounter the unpleasantness of foregoing what is temptingly spread before them; too ostentatious in their notions of "correctness" to omit what they think is expected by the hollow conventionalities of society. And altogether they lack the moral courage to make a stand and take a line of their own. The result is unpaid bills and inability to look their tradesmen in the face; or, worse still, a debt to a money-lender and their income encumbered for life. The cure for this culpable weakness is to be found in cultivating three virtues essential to all manliness of character. We must have the forethought to calculate exactly what we can and

what we cannot afford; we must have the sternness to forego altogether indulgences which we have found that we cannot pay for; we must be simple enough to care more for what is right than for holding our own in society.

A word first, then, about carelessness and want of forethought. It is surely a most unworthy way of living to go on from day to day at haphazard, without ever taking the trouble to ask ourselves how far our monthly income will go; whether we are not incurring embarrassments from which we never may be able to get free. This is no matter of mere enlightened self-interest. We must not think that we are only our own enemies if we fall into pecuniary difficulties. In reality, people who live imprudently do harm to everybody around them. They raise the standard of expenditure for others who are similarly circumstanced. They help to establish or to keep up a false standard which conduces to extravagance. They lighten, especially should they be popular, the stigma which the honesty of society ought to set upon laxity and recklessness. They learn by insensible

degrees to lose the nice edge of their own honour, to acquiesce in much that is doubtful, and in some things which are positively wrong; and no one, we well know, can do this without shedding a malign influence all around him.

I would say, then, to those who have life before them, who perhaps are at that stage in their lives when imprudence is easiest to run into, and *seems to be* most easy to retrieve, is it fair on yourself or on other people that you should allow yourself to slide into embarrassments just because you will not take a little trouble to ascertain what your income will really buy? Is it manly, is it commonly honest to lower your own standard and that of others because you will not face the troublesome task of looking carefully how much you have to spend, and then regulating your outlay accordingly? Or is it worthy of a man of common-sense to calculate so carelessly and so inadequately that you will be liable to debt at any moment if some call, unforeseen though not improbable, should upset your oversanguine calculations?

It was sound advice which was given by Prince Albert to a daughter when she left her home to be married, to remember that there was one kind of entertaining which must be allowed for in the budget of every household, "the visits of *Monsieur l'Imprévu*," the calls of the unforeseen upon one's purse.

After imprudence comes culpable self-indulgence. And by "culpable," I mean culpable for oneself, one's means and the calls upon one's means being such as one knows them to be. It is incredible, until you have tried it, how much may be reduced upon your expenditure by the use of one very simple question put honestly and persistently to yourself—can I not do without this or that? The things that we cannot do without are astonishingly few when we fairly try it. Do not think that I am but trying to be paradoxical if I say that it is easier to be rich than to be solvent. Is it not true that you may be rich in two ways, while you can only be solvent in one? You may be rich by *having much* or by *wanting little*; you can only keep solvent by wanting

little. For much and little are relative terms, and unless you conscientiously form the habit of reducing what you conceive to be your wants, you will find that your ideas of what is necessary keep always in advance of what you can afford, be your income large or small. Reckon your income by what you think are your wants, and you will always be just a little short. Rule your wants by what you know to be your income, and you will generally have just a little over. But all this requires a training in self-denial. It is softness, the easy-going habit which orders just what it feels inclined for, that leads in innumerable cases to debt irremediable and hopeless. Pay such people's debts and start them fair, and in a few months they are as deep as before. The moment they are free and can get credit, they slip back into the old course of self-indulgence. They order not what they require, but whatever takes their fancy at the moment; and the very last thing they ever think of is whether they can pay for it or not. Now I would ask, does this become Christian people? We believe that we

owe everything that is good, every hope for this world and for the other, to a Sacrifice unspeakably great. Are we to lower our standard of honesty rather than submit to any sacrifice however small? Are we to choose the broad way of self-indulgence, when we know that even here in our daily life, we should be better off for some little self-denial? I speak, believe me, from much happy experience, when I say that of the two kinds of living, the one which calls for little daily self-denials for the sake of what we hold to be right is far healthier, far more bracing to the character than to be able to indulge oneself at will, even if the indulgence is bought with one's own money. Which, then, are we to think is the happier course, to deny ourselves, or to have the indulgence when it is not bought with our own money but with other people's?

The third cause, most prolific of indebtedness, is aiming at social display. Whatever be the circle in which one moves, there is the temptation to seem to keep pace with it, perhaps to seem able to outstrip it. But suppose one's

income is less than other people's, either in itself or because of the claims on it. Are we then to ask, with a certain air of injury, why we should be different from other people? Or, shall we ask, as we all are bound to do, why we should not hold quietly on our own course in accordance with what Providence lays upon us? I would ask *why* we should be like other people, even supposing our means to be the same? Is it a virtue to be so enslaved to conventionality that you dare not call your income your own? Is it manly not to know whether you want a thing till you have ascertained that your neighbour possesses it? Is it even enjoyable to be dragged into a purchase, not because you really care for the thing, but because somebody else has a taste for it? Nay, there are questions which touch us closer than this. Is it Christian, can we even think it lady-like to have the credit for being well-dressed, if not a thing that you wear has been paid for? Is it creditable to give entertainments if it is your tradesmen, not you, that bear the cost of them? I have often tried to picture to myself what would happen at some

fashionable entertainment—the dismay of genial host and smiling hostess, the confusion on the faces of the guests—if those out of whose pocket it all comes were suddenly to appear in the room and claim their places as the real entertainers. This, then, is the third cause of debt, the mingled ostentation and cowardice which will not, or which dare not say frankly the little words: "I cannot afford it." We profess to belong to the homeless Carpenter, to One who had not where to lay His head: and all the while we regard it as disgraceful to be unable to pamper ourselves with luxuries just because other people can afford them.

But if such are the causes of debt, let us ask what are some of its results?

It is a short step from extravagance to recklessness, a shorter still from recklessness to dishonour.

Let me quote to you a very wise caution which was given me when I started in life: "Remember that you may be honourable to begin with, and yet that nothing may prove too mean for you to do if once you get fairly into

difficulties." Which of us has not sometimes seen it verified? Let a man once grow accustomed to indebtedness, to the sense that he owes money and cannot pay it, and how naturally does he slide to the next stage in which he reconciles himself to the fact, becomes totally indifferent about paying it! He cannot always go on with a restless conscience—it is too disagreeable a companion—and so he teaches his conscience to acquiesce, nay, he ceases in a very little while to have a conscience about money at all. He will borrow from an intimate friend when he knows that he is about to become bankrupt. He learns to cringe to his social inferiors, that the evil day may be averted for a little. He sinks to all sorts of expedients, the thought of which would once have cut him like a lash. And the evil does not stop with himself; that is why I have to speak with such cruel plainness. He taints the moral atmosphere around him with a miasma of laxity about honour. And I believe that no task is more difficult, I am tempted to say none is more hopeless, than to try to instil honourable notions

into those who have grown up from their youth amid surroundings of carelessness about debt. One meets people who appear from their childhood to lack the moral sense in such matters. Inquire, and you will generally discover that their fathers and grandfathers were in debt.

It would be easy to say much more upon the subject, but I think that its causes and its consequences are enough to brand indebtedness in all our eyes. Just return for a single moment, before we close, into the atmosphere into which St. Paul raised the subject. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." Just ask whether we can really love our neighbours if we are careless about owing money. Take the word "charity" in the sense so often given to it, that of giving away money to the poor. Is it possible that such charity as this can have anything really charitable about it, so long as we owe what we give away? I have known people reckless and indebted whose purses were ever open to an appeal. But then, whose was the money in the open purse? It did not belong to them but to their creditors. But apart from mere giving of

alms, there is nothing more fatal to a loving spirit, nothing which tends more inevitably to sourness than the uneasiness, the carking care, the petty troubles which are the portion of reckless extravagance. A reckless youth makes a grudging age. The selfishness which will not consider how far its expenditure is justifiable, is a spirit diametrically opposed to what we call Christian charity in the highest sense. If, therefore, we love one another, nothing more will be required to keep us solvent, apart from inevitable misfortune.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE NEW BIRTH.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.—1 *Peter* i. 3.

THE morning freshness of the first Easter Day fans our cheek in St. Peter's ardent words. There is a rush, an eager movement of reality in the way the thoughts crowd upon one another as he pours forth the whole fervency of his heart in the thought of what the friends of the Lord Jesus have found in their risen Master. The new birth to a living hope by the Resurrection of Christ from the dead; the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, to which that new birth gives the title; the protection under which we may abide in the

journey from faith to salvation by which we are to enter on the inheritance; the unseen, dearly loved Master in whom we rejoice through all trials; the present out-pouring of the Spirit revealing to us what angels long to look into; the girding of the loins of the mind for perseverance in attaining the great goal—all these thoughts sweep him away in a great rush as his mind goes back to that one morning when his Master was given back to his sight.

How else could it be, he would have asked, with one who had lived through that "Day of days"? It dawned upon him in the blackness of despair—heart and brain alike racked and distracted with the remembrance of his loss and of his guilt. Should he be haunted to the day of his death by that look upon the Face that he had loved? Should the sound of the cock-crowing on that fell morning remain as a hateful "fixed idea" to drive him mad with remorse for his cowardice? Would Jesus never smile upon him again with the assurance that his hour of fatal weakness was forgotten in the reality of his

affection? Those shattered hopes, were they all that should remain to him of the dreams that he had dreamed of his Master's kingdom? Those ideals in which Jesus had been triumphant, and His disciples had been enthroned at His side, were they withered by the dread realities that had succeeded them, so that never, never, never should they be realised?

Yes, alas! so it seemed to the crushed heart which had beat so high with unchastened expectations.

Then came what he had treated as an "idle tale," when one half of the women who had gone out came back with their vision of angels, while the others did not dare to say a word. And he brooded on, rather irritated, perhaps, at what seemed such a trifling with his grief than aroused to any glimmering of hope. But the next message was too startling to be disregarded. White-robed angels, and messages of Resurrection — these might well be but the dreams of imagination. But a rifled tomb—Mary had seen it with her eyes —the sacred Body made the object of a vile

outrage—or else—what had been those strange sayings about rising again on the third day? The tomb was empty—that, at least, was plain fact; and oh, the uprising of the possibility! Could it be? Was there the wildest possibility that no outrage had despoiled the narrow chamber, but that the Master—— No! it could not; he dared not hope it. But at least he must away to the Sepulchre; he must see, he must judge by his own senses. No halting at the door for his eagerness; he stoops through the entrance of the Sepulchre; he looks round; nothing here speaks of sacrilege: what spoiler would have left clothes and napkin ordered thus in the fragrant darkness of the new tomb? Could it be—could he accept it as sober fact that this meant Resurrection, and nothing less? St. John was convinced on the spot, for intuition, not reasoning, was his way. But of Peter we are told only this: that "as yet he knew not the Scripture, that He must rise from the dead," and, "that he departed to his home, wondering at that which was come to pass."

Then the Magdalen saw the Master as she wept. And finally before the evening had come, the cry of all the Apostles was this: "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon." The thrice-denied, yet thrice-beloved Master had been seen of the penitent disciple. It was gone, the haunting, brooding despair; the loved face had beamed upon him again, not now with the awful look of reproach which he had thought should be its last association, but calm in the radiant glory of risen life, irradiate with the joy of reconciliation. Henceforward the resurrection of the Master was the life of the life of His disciple. From that day, until his Lord should return, St. Peter was to stand before the world as embodying in the glowing words that burst from him, how the life of the Christian upon earth should be the perpetual realisation of the resurrection; how the present, risen life of the Redeemer is the ground of our faith and of our hope.

Three things the Christian life must possess if it is to be lived in Jesus the risen Master.

There must be first the high enthusiasm of assurance: Jesus lives and lives for me.

And next there must be the solid basis of outward fact: the assurance must not hang in mid-air, a thing unwarranted by aught beyond itself.

And third, through the power of that assurance, the outward fact must have passed into the inner life: the Lord Jesus must not only be risen; I must not only be assured that He is risen as a fact external to myself; He must be risen as the Lord of life in my heart; I, too, must be risen in Him; I must be living a new life in His strength; nay, He must be living it in me.

First, a life which is to be actively Christian must be a life of enthusiastic assurance. It has to be lived against an atheistic propaganda which is half contemptuous and half enthusiastic —contemptuous when it speaks of our faith, enthusiastic in its belief in itself. The coarse atheism of a century ago, great only in gibes and negations, offering nothing to take the place of what it destroyed, has given way to a scientific enthusiasm from which we cannot withhold our admiration. We can no longer offer to bow it out of the room with Carlyle's great apostrophe

to Voltaire. For it has not only "a torch wherewith to burn," it has its "hammer to build withal." Dreary enough, it may well be, to us Christians appears the building where we are invited to dwell, dreary with the one grand negation which to us means death and despair, the denial that we have a Father to love us, and that the world in which we dwell is that Father's redeemed with the blood of His own Son; but still a building of positive assertion, an erection of a new framework of society, with an "Ethic of Free-thought" of its own, built up on the nature of man, and devoted to "the service of man" apart from any relation to a higher power, nay, in express denial of such a relation.

To hold our own against a system such as this, we must have, I say, an unhesitating assurance, enthusiastic with the enthusiasm of full persuasion, fruitful with the manifold fruitfulness which comes only of self-sacrifice for the Master.

"It is Christ that died, nay, rather that is risen again, Who is also at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

Nothing short of an assurance such as this will hold its own against the insistence of the tangible, which asserts itself so masterfully all around us. We shall never do probable duties in the service of a Saviour half believed in. It must be for Him, the Risen, the Ascended, "Whom having not seen ye love, in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

But how is such enthusiasm to be maintained? What its ground-work in our beliefs and in our characters?

It must first be a practical enthusiasm displaying itself in work, in sacrifice. Before the world, and at the bar of our own judgment it must first stand the one grand moral test by which every one about us will try it, by which we are necessitated to try it by a compulsion as deep as human nature. We must answer that most searching of interrogatories: What do you do for it? what do you give up for it?

Very different in all of their details are the answers which we severally have to give. One

is called with a deep inner calling to answer: I give everything up for it; no home for me, no tender domestic ties, no clinging to husband or to wife, no love of little children of my own, no money, no luxury, little comfort; for all these were incompatible with my vocation, which is to follow Christ in His poverty, to earn the blessing of going through that needle's eye which affords my one entrance into the kingdom.

Nor, thank God, are there wanting among us the examples of those who have given this answer. To say nothing of the living* who are here with us, of those whose voluntary self-sacrifice you are asked to assist liberally this evening, we have all of us at least heard of two who have given, in the India of to-day, noble instances of following such a vocation. One was George Bowen, the other Simeon Wilberforce O'Neil.† By the power of a morti-

* The Society of St. John the Evangelist, the Sisters of All Saints (to whom the offertory was to be given), and the Sisters of St. Mary the Virgin, Wantage.

† The Rev. George Bowen, missionary of the Episcopal Methodist Connexion, died in Bombay. Father O'Neil,

fied life these two, in their so different ways, have testified to the power of enthusiasm which still is inherent in the Gospel. We may not all of us appreciate or understand some of the principles which underlay those noble lives. But into one thing we all of us can enter; we know that men of cultivated minds, men with bodies as sensitive as our own, do not live in the bazaar, in native fashion, without being persuaded in their own minds that they are upheld by the power of a living Master Who is with them to support them in their self-sacrifice.

But to us others is there never a vocation to live mortified lives in society? We who know, as so many of us know, that to attempt to live the life of ascetic heroism would mean only to break down and to become ridiculous, to bring discredit on the cause that we love, and possibly to lose our own souls—have we nothing to sacrifice for our Master, to show that we believe

of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, died at Mhow. Each was known for his ascetic life and his intense devotion to the natives of India.

in His Resurrection, to constitute a dying in His death?

Believe me, no monopoly of enthusiasm attaches to any one life or to any one manner of living. "If any man is able to receive it, let him receive it"—thus spake Christ of the life of asceticism, of the counsels of perfection to the few. But where are those who are not included in His other saying: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me"?

For those who believe in the Cross, there shall be opportunities of bearing the Cross. You have at least your own passions to be resisted, your own faults to be acknowledged and overcome, your own burdens to be borne, your own nature to be sanctified through and through. Undertake this in the power of Christ Risen, and you shall not lack an answer to the questions: What do you do for the Saviour? what do you give up for His sake? Carry these out in the lowliest of vocations, and you shall not lack a basis of character for the enthusiastic assurance of the Gospel.

But, then, a basis of character is not all; there must be a basis of objective fact, of fact quite independent of your assurance of it. Your assurance must not hang in mid-air, unsupported by aught beyond itself. Your religion must not be liable to the disease to which a cynical modern writer has said that all religions become liable in their old age—your faith must not "die of being found out." And this, most assuredly, is what will happen to it unless it be based on solid fact from which no new discovery can dislodge it. And this is what is afforded it by the event of Easter Day. The living hope which St. Peter sets forth to you is based on the solid fact of the Resurrection. He spoke of himself, in his address at Cæsarea, as one of the chosen witnesses, who "did eat and drink with Jesus Christ after He arose from the dead." He does not prate of any "Spiritual Resurrection" effected by the enthusiasm of disciples for a Master whose crucified body underwent the self-same disintegration which awaits our own bodies after death. Unbelief makes the en-

thusiasm of disciples, in other words, the hysteria of Mary Magdalen, the basis of the Resurrection of their Master. The eye-witness who handled Him, and saw Him, makes the bodily Resurrection of the Master the basis of the enthusiasm of His followers.

And on such a subject at least let us be honest. If we do not believe, as a sober fact, that the Crucified did actually die, and, having actually died and been buried, did arise from the grave on the third day, let us, at any rate, avoid the wretched cant which does not say, all this is a lie, but which prattles of a moral Resurrection in the heart of the enthusiastic disciple. Jesus Christ is either risen or not risen. Either He lives at the right hand of God in an existence as truly bodily at this moment as it was when the nails went through His hands, or, the Body which was born of Mary has been dissipated long ago into its elements, reabsorbed into the earth from whence it came. In the one case, He may truly live again in the spiritual life of His followers. In the other,

His influence may have survived, but to speak of Him as living in us is to mock us by pretending to continue to us what our instinct for history has made incredible.

But, to conclude, let all Christian men and women try to forget, with me, for one or two brief minutes, the haunting problems which form part of our great cross as Christ's followers called to live in the present century. Let us take that grand fact of the Resurrection, of whose truth we are absolutely persuaded, and let us see how our assurance of its reality can make it pass into the very life of our life and become to us a power unto salvation.

Christ lives with an actual life, in a human Body exalted to the heavens. And because He thus "arose for our justification," therefore He lives, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the hearts and lives of His own. There is that within every Christian bosom which is not of our own or of this earth. There beats in every pulse of our inner being, there vibrates through every nerve of our character a power which is Christ in us. This power is not mere matter

of assurance, not something which, after all, is but our own, something which, conceivably, God forbid! might be a delusion.

Our assurance of the truth of the Resurrection is the *condition of* that power dwelling in us: it is not the power itself: that is something external to us, something Divine. Mysterious it is if you will, incomprehensible by mortal understanding. But, mystery of mysteries though it be, it is "Christ in us, the hope of glory."

It is the direct work of God in the heart, that new birth to a lively hope of which St. Peter speaks in the text as a matter of personal experience. In virtue of our assurance of the Resurrection, the outward fact passes into the inner life. What to others is at best a fact of history becomes to us the fact of facts within ourselves. He who rose and "appeared unto Simon," no phantom, but able to eat and drink with him, He rises unto newness of life in every heart where His Cross has been set up.

Do you give up for love of that Saviour what you know to be incompatible with His claims? Do you do with a good will, for His sake, what

He demands as your sacrifice of love? Then that Saviour, by the power of the Holy Spirit, raises you to a lively hope in virtue of His own Resurrection: in Him you receive, here and now, "the end of your faith, even the salvation of your soul." The complete, the inalienable possession of it is reserved for that eternal inheritance into which you shall enter hereafter. But that which you receive in this world is different from what awaits you hereafter, in degree and not in kind. The only absolute difference is that here you are in a state of probation; that here, as each moment passes over you, you must cling, at the peril of final loss, to that which as possessed hereafter, shall be indefeasible, assured to eternity. In its nature the present possession is the same as the everlasting inheritance; for what is either but the gift of God Himself, imparted by the power of the Holy Ghost in virtue of Christ's Resurrection? To grasp this as an actual possession, to "gird up the loins of your mind, to be sober and hope to the end, to set your hope perfectly upon the grace that is being

brought to you in the revelation of Jesus Christ"—such is the exhortation of the enthusiastic Apostle, flowing out of his belief in the Resurrection.

And if that rising be actual fact, and if, being actual, outward fact, it has sacramentally passed into your inner being, and be retained by your enthusiastic assurance of it, then the exhortation is no empty form of words: it but bids you take practical advantage of what Christ is ready to effect in you, nay, of what Christ Himself *is* in you.

He is risen, risen in your heart: true newness of life is there. The old energies of nature within you are quickened to supernatural life and consecrated to uses beyond themselves. Let no recollection of past sin, then, no haunting consciousness of present weakness interfere with the hold that you take upon the grace that is actually being brought to you through your faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Did He give you anything short of His very self, I could not thus exhort you to hope. But it is He who undertakes to live in us; and "if

God be for us, who can be against us?" No wonder that the Easter message of the Apostle should be one of exultant jubilation. He is writing to those "who are being kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." What wonder that "though now they see Him not, yet, believing on Him, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory"?

THE CLEANSING FIRE OF THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

For every one shall be salted with fire.
St. Mark ix. 49.

CHRIST warns us in one of the sternest of His discourses that "every one shall be salted with fire," that those who escape from the dread doom which sin unforgiven would have brought upon them, shall yet, in the course of God's discipline, be exercised with the sharp, stinging process which is needed to perfect their cleansing. And to all who believe in His teaching, who believe, because the Master has said it, that there cannot be cleansing without burning, the thought must be unspeakably precious, that the fire by which their stains shall be burnt away is nothing else than the Holiness of His own nature. On this thought, so stern and so

loving, I would ask you to dwell for a little while in the hope that, by considering it together, we may be led on to greater hatred of evil, to deeper earnestness in the service of God.

"Our God is a consuming fire," the Holiness of His nature is so intense that nothing which is tainted with evil can abide unscathed in His presence. Even those to whom that presence is happiness, even those who have learnt to bask in the remembrance of it, even those whose chief delight it has become to get away from the distractions of outward things that they may abide in that presence alone—even to them, till their sanctification is completed and they take up their abode once for all in the light of the countenance that they have loved, the sanctity which surrounds the All-Holy is presented as a fiery stream, as the sharp sword proceeding from His mouth.

There is much need that we should accustom ourselves now and then to this aspect of the nature of our God; for it is part of the weakness of the present day that we are apt to lose sight of His sternness in the truth of His marvellous

forbearance. Meet it is that we should dwell on that forbearance, that we should impress upon the weary and the heavy-laden that they have but to come to the loving Saviour and that He will give rest to their souls. But not even in the contemplation of His tenderness is it safe that His stern Holiness should be forgotten.

It was John Keble, one who yielded to none in the tenderness of his love to his Redeemer, who yet exhorted his rustic congregation: "We must pray to God, day after day, that we may fear Him more and more, or else, as the world continues close to us, and we cannot avoid being tempted, we are sure, in fact, day after day, to fear Him less and less." If Keble had to pray for holy fear, I think that we may well bear to be admonished of it. We desire, if we think about such things, to spend eternity in the presence of God. We know that hereafter, at any rate, there is no happiness apart from that presence. Our thoughts may be very vague and undefined as to the processes here and hereafter by which fitness for that presence

is to be secured. But at least if we believe in a hereafter, we desire that our place in the other world may be among those who are fit for His presence. And this is the condition of such fitness, that the God who is a consuming fire should purge us from every defilement.

"Every one," He tells us, "shall be salted with fire." The words are not quite easy of explanation, but you will find, if you have patience to follow it, that their suggestiveness will more than repay you for any time that may be spent on their exposition. Our Lord had been speaking at the moment, of avoiding the occasions of evil. Taking His imagery from the Valley of Gehenna where the offal of Jerusalem was cast out, He tells of a fire which is unquenchable, of a worm which never can die. The flame by which the offal was consumed, the crawling things that lived upon the garbage suggested the horrors of final loss, the agony of separation from God, the inward remorse of an evil conscience avenging itself for warnings neglected, by reproaches which come too late. To escape from so intolerable

a condemnation, any sacrifice, He tells us, is worth while. If it be the right hand or the right eye which exposes us to the loss of the whole being, they must be cut off, must be plucked out, must be cast from us. We must be thankful to escape from the burning, leaving a part of our very selves to be consumed. "It is better for thee to enter into life, halt, than having thy two feet, to be cast into Gehenna." "It is better for thee to enter one-eyed into the kingdom of God than, having two eyes, to be cast into Gehenna, where the worm of them does not end, and the fire is not quenched." And the reason for acquiescence in these requirements, stern and hard, even to ruthlessness, though they sound—that reason is what I took for my text. "For every one shall be salted with fire." Fire there must be and there shall be for each one of us that is infected with the contagion of moral evil. We are to choose how the fire shall be applied, as an agent of preservation or of destruction. It is to all that is corrupt beyond cleansing that the fire of destruction shall be applied. When the kingdom

of God cannot hold it for fear lest its own purity should suffer, when a place in the holy city has been forfeited, because there no defilement can enter, then the offal shall be finally cast out to the worm that does not end and to the fire that is not quenched. But once it might have been scorched into soundness. The fire that must now burn it up would then have had the virtue of salt: it would have saved it from the incurable corruption that can now be neither mitigated nor endured. It might once have been salted with fire, it must now be consumed of the same.

Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts;
Look well if there be any evil way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

This prayer is what rises to my lips as I dwell on stern warnings like these, and shudder at the possibility of disregarding them.

And yet, to any one who is in earnest in what is good, surely the thought of the consuming fire of God's Holiness must be one of the most reassuring that can be presented.

"Every one shall be salted with fire"; then at least, we all may be so dealt with; then at least, there is no blot in our past lives so deep engrained that its power to defile us may not be scorched out of us if we will.

Are we trying to live as God's true children: trying to realise in very deed, in our daily lives, that holiness which we know is within our reach, just because we have been made children of God? If we are so, then of one thing I am certain—that the very fact of our having entered on this endeavour must have brought home to us the sinfulness of sin. To be the forgiven and accepted child of God, and yet to love Him so little as I do; to be made partaker of the forgiveness of the Cross, and yet to be so conformed to a sinful world; to find passions, and temper, and even will so little submitted to the Holy Spirit—if we have anything of chivalry about us, any feeling of what gratitude ought to be, the sense of sinfulness must come home to us the more closely, the more entirely we can believe in our forgiveness.

And, my dear friends, if this is really the case with us, I think the thought of the stern Holiness of God must sometimes be more comforting to our hearts than the thought of His tenderness itself. At least, the thought that He is as holy as He is loving must surely be of infinite helpfulness. The evil is so engrained into our nature, that gratitude seems too feeble a motive to ensure that it shall be wholly purged away. So ungrateful as we know ourselves to be, so capable of forgetting our great debt, so prone to be carried away by evil memories, so open to the seductions of pleasure, so shrinking from the discipline of pain; if God's love were all we knew of His nature, then I think that we might all of us be afraid lest some power should be still wanted for our cleansing beyond all that such a motive could supply.

But a God who is a consuming fire, whose Holiness is so ineffably spotless that He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look upon sin; a God from out of whose throne there goes forth a fiery stream; if I

can throw myself into the hands of such a Being, can be assured that He loves me, the sinner, as utterly as He abhorreth my sin; then surely the very terror of the Lord is my best assurance that He will teach me to please Him more entirely than I have ever dreamed of doing. If only I can give myself to Him, to make me whatever He will, and to do so in just His own way; if only I am in earnest in so doing, not mocking Him by words without meaning, but praying Him with the prayer of the whole heart: "Prove me and examine my thoughts, and see if there be any way of wickedness in me"; if I have taken home to myself those other wondrous words: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"; and yet can go on truly to say: "But the Lord hath heard me"—then, indeed, it is the knowledge of His Holiness, of His utter abhorrence of evil, that assures me that my petition will be heard. For then His very love makes it impossible that He should tolerate sin in His own. Can I think that He would give

His Son for my salvation, and yet leave that salvation incomplete, by allowing sin to have dominion over His redeemed? Can I think that He looks at me as a father, and yet will leave me under the dominion of my worst enemies? If I leave myself entirely in His hands, then surely He must scorch away my sin with the fire of that Holiness which is His nature.

Yes, the thought is unutterably reassuring to any one who is in earnest in what is right.

And yet it is a thought of fear, none the less. *Is* the sinner so separated from the sin that His indignation as it burns up the iniquity, will leave me unscathed at His side? It has such hold of me, is so terribly dear to me, or at least to a part of myself—dare I say that I have had grace to part company with it, so that I can dwell with everlasting burnings, with the fire of a God such as this, and feel sure that purification, not destruction, is the effect which His awful Holiness will produce on me?

My friends, there is much need to ask such questions. We may none of us be tainted

with the fanaticism which leads some in their assurance of their own safety to treat the all-Holy — may He forgive me for saying it — almost as an equal to be sported with. But how many of us so realise His Holiness, so take in our own contradictions of it, that we have learnt, being sinners in His presence, to fear Him as He ought to be feared? How many of us see the sinfulness of sin so as to hate it as it ought to be hated? How many of us are humble enough in fact—not simply in a form of words or in a good will, but really enough convinced of our own badness — to be labouring as a sinner ought to labour, to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling?

It is one thing to be assured of God's love, of His caring more for our salvation than we ever have cared about it ourselves, to be sure that He is willing to hold us up, and to give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified; it is quite another to have really taken in what the demands of His Holiness are. It is one thing to have come to Him as a sinner, and asked that pardon for the sake of the Precious

Blood, which we know that we could not earn for ourselves; it is quite another to have learnt by long experience, what the power of sin over us really is, how terribly it is identified with our moral nature, how slowly it loses its hold, how we love it and cling to it after all.

The very joy of the first hold of forgiveness, in those who have been brought back after much wandering, the very failure to get fairly face to face with it, in those who have never known what it was to have strayed far from the grace of their baptism—these things, however blessed in themselves, are, through our weakness, converted into snares to prevent us taking in our own sinfulness and the extremity of our need of sanctification.

It is by what we learn to know of ourselves when God's spirit is at work in our hearts; by all that it dawns upon us by degrees that we as yet *do not* know about ourselves; by the hideous possibilities of self-deception which open as yawning gulfs under our feet; by the dread impossibility of deceiving Him, and by the scattering of self-deceit which this secures—it

is by these things, I say, that we are taught that holy fear is a grace to be cultivated if we would secure our everlasting salvation.

And He who wakes this consciousness into being is the same who will secure that it lead us right. He does but ask a complete self-surrender, and all shall be effected in His time. It is the simplest, the most searching of demands. Just because of its utter simplicity, it includes everything that a demand can include, when it is made by the Creator upon the creature.

Once more, it is utter self-surrender. The right hand, He tells us, must be cut off; the right eye, He tells us, must be plucked out; "For every one shall be salted with fire," shall feel the searching and the scorching of a Holiness which will have us pure, or will not have us at all; shall learn the love of the Saviour who would die to make him holy before God, and who, just because He so died, is prepared to put us through any pain which may be needed to effect His great object.

By affliction, by humiliation, by contrition, by

all that can lower us in our own eyes, by contrast between our standard and His own to display to us the lowness of our aims, by visions of the intolerable Holiness which we have thought it an easy matter to draw near to, by everything which the flesh would least choose and to which the spirit can most hardly be braced—by all these He will lead us on, if we allow Him, to the sanctity which forms His own ideal.

But, then, "every one must be salted with fire." We are men of unclean lips, and we belong to a people of unclean lips, and we aspire to see the King, the Lord of Hosts, to take part in the hymn of the seraphim, in which they proclaim Him thrice holy.

We must be cleansed, then, as the Prophet was cleansed: the burning coal must be placed upon our lips.

May He grant us that surrender to Himself which shall shrink from no burning which may cleanse us, from no cutting by which evil may be extirpated.

SYMPATHY.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.—*Galatians* vi. 2.

SOME of the thoughts which underlie the word sympathy appear to me to be in a very special manner the outcome of the conditions of modern life. It is difficult, far more difficult than we sometimes realise, to compare our own age with any other, more especially with that which lies just behind us. We may forget as we attempt such a comparison, that we carry with us our own point of view in the very effort which we make to transcend it; that the very impulse which prompts the comparison is part of that which we are attempting to estimate; that while we think that we have ascended to a

point of outlook from which we can compare ourselves with our forefathers, still, unless we could cease to be ourselves, we must look at ourselves from the point of view of our own times. Still, I think that I may venture to affirm that it is specially characteristic of the present age, as compared with others whose memorials are before us, that the sensibilities which it develops in all of us are of a special, perhaps of a morbid keenness. Whether it be that our artificial surroundings make us fonder of dwelling on our own feelings; or whether it be that our organs of sensibility are strung to a greater tension than of old, it is the case that we thrill to pain and pleasure, especially perhaps to pain, with a sensitiveness which was not known in rougher days.

This sensitiveness may take many directions. In some of its many manifestations it is nothing but morbid and unmanly, in some it leads straight into the abyss of what is called the fleshly school in contemporary literature and art, in others its manifestations are so ridiculous that it affords their most humorous

subjects to the satirist and the caricaturist of modern manners.

But there is one direction in which, with wise guiding, its whole influence may be purely for good, the fresh insight which it undoubtedly affords us into the secret of our neighbours' joys and sorrows. I say the *fresh* insight which it has afforded, for I think that there are many indications that it is something which comes home to ourselves with an intensity unknown in other days. Just to take a single instance: when we look back upon one of the worst features of centuries which preceded our own, the attempt to extort evidence by torture, I think even the revolting wickedness of the practice strikes us less than its amazing stupidity. We can understand its being possible to suppose that to get at truth, it was justifiable to inflict torture. But is there one of us who can enter into the frame of mind in which it was thought that the application of torture was the way in which truth could be best arrived at? Now what is it that makes our point of view so infinitely far removed from that of old? Is it not that we have acquired a

new power to put ourselves in the place of the victim? That as we look back in imagination at the sufferings which were inflicted upon the rack, we can enter into the feelings of the sufferer more vividly than those who saw and heard them; can see, as they apparently did not see, how it was inevitable that to escape from his anguish, he should say just what he was wanted to say? It would be possible to give many other instances, but I pass on, taking the fact as indisputable that we can put ourselves in the place of another as it was impossible for people to do in former days. It has been said of a great bishop in England that, "in him sympathy amounts to a form of genius," and no one who has known the man intimately would be disposed to doubt the truth of the assertion. One has known others, both men and women, of whom much the same thing could be said; and, apart from those gifted souls who hold aloof from nothing which is human, there are many who within their own circle have the power of appropriating to themselves all that touches another member to the quick.

We touch, we enter into each other's lives at many points, and to a wonderful depth. Where community of heart is complete, as in the noblest types of friendship and in the intimacies of closely united families, this interpenetration of human souls reaches a point where words cannot follow it, where the comprehension which each brings to each, which each receives from each, is as though one soul indwelt two bodies.

> At first 'twas something our two souls
> Should mix as mists do ; each is sucked
> In each now, on the new stream rolls
> Whatever rocks obstruct.

Such intimacies must always be rare ; they must have been experienced before they can be understood ; they are made for us to such a degree that it is unpractical to dwell much upon them. But the capacities which make these possible can be cultivated in more commonplace relations, and in these we can all of us find a scope for much that is of the highest nobility, though it should lead to nothing else beyond itself.

Let me then indicate one or two of the points

in which I think that the closer sympathies of modern life have superseded in a wonderful measure some of the rough-and-ready methods of older days. They will perhaps suggest dangers for our avoidance, as well as possibilities for our endeavours, but for both we may be the tenderer and the stronger. And, lastly, I shall offer a few suggestions for the practical cultivation of our higher sympathies.

It seems to me, first, then, that in the management of children we are strangely different from some who went before us; that we live nearer to them, understand them, feel for them, more sympathetically, more on their own level; that we aim more at development from within, and work less by repression from without; that we get more down into all their little difficulties; are in fact more of helpful companions, and less of rulers and masters than was the case in days that I can remember. We are better able to put ourselves in their place; we read their life more from within, and try to live it for and with them, instead of merely observing it from without as something to be regulated by rule.

There is a danger, and a very great danger, that in trying to make such understanding the principle by which to guide a child's life, we may lose sight of the absolute, stern necessity that he should never in the ultimate resort find that anything can be substituted for obedience. But if sympathy be made to help towards obedience, not ever to serve as something to excuse from it; if the old rule of unquestioning submission be lightened by the comprehension which goes along with it, then it seems as though the whole of the life before them must be enriched by what we can do for our children.

We can make its earliest stage something deeper, something more intelligible to them, something in which the little life is more expanded, is nourished by influences more genial, is saved from the sad feeling of isolation, of having all the world against one, which never perhaps in after life is felt so keenly, or so despairingly, as it sometimes is in the first sorrows of naughtiness.

Again, in all that is done in the present day for the relief of bodily suffering and for the

alleviation of the harder lots in life, this spirit of true Christian fellow-feeling is that which underlies the whole work. We may some of us have learnt from our own experience, we have many of us seen with our own eyes, the change which has been wrought of late years in the wards of our Hospitals in this City. What is it that is the secret of it all? Professional skill and conscientiousness were present there before as they are now. Nor does the trained intelligence of surgeon and physician make their possessor less capable of tender sympathy because all the feelings of his heart have to be brought into total subordination to the skill of brain and hand. But professional training and skill have associated a new power with themselves in the administration of the details of their work.* Those details are now carried out by hands which have been dedicated to the service not simply that their possessors may earn their living in a useful and honourable calling, but

* The principal hospitals in Bombay are nursed by the sisters of All Saints, and that of Poona, by the sisters of St. Mary, Wantage.

because out of feeling for their fellows they have dedicated themselves to the service of God and man, in the task of alleviating suffering for those who are hardly bestead.

I might multiply special examples, but I pass straight to what is more general. We have not all of us got children to bring up; we may perhaps never come in contact with the sick; the circumstances of life in this country cut us off from innumerable opportunities which are possessed by the well-to-do in England, of helping their less prosperous neighbours. But at least we all come in contact day by day with those who in some form or other find that things go less smoothly with them than they could wish, we all of us can see in some cases how the yoke presses hard upon tender shoulders. There must be hands which every one of us have to shake which will be conscious whether the act is merely formal, or whether it is the expression of some community of feeling; there are words which we constantly have to speak, it may be on most commonplace subjects, where

something in the turn of the expression, or some gentleness in the tone of the voice can show that the order or the advice, the conventional inquiry or the daily greeting, does come from real kindliness of heart, that would desire to share our brother's joys and sorrows. The least and the most ordinary affairs can be conducted as by brother with brother, or at least as by man with man, when no one perhaps dare find fault with us if their conduct were of a more mechanical nature. We can see in each person that we meet, either one who has a heart like our own, with its special secret springs of joy and sorrow, its weaknesses, its strong points, its latent nobility or secret shame; or we can find in exactly the same people brought in contact with us in just the same way, mere machines to drive a pen or add a column, mere hands to get through a day's work, mere possessors of money or of money's worth which may serve us in driving a bargain. And we may be sure that each knows very well in which of these lights we regard him; whether our heart takes account of him or not;

whether we are shutting ourselves within the fence of our own selfishness, in hard unappreciative isolation, or trying to keep a heart full of fellow-feeling for everything which claims brotherhood with our humanity.

A few words, then, as to how to make the difference, as to how we may aim at what is highest, as to how we may best avoid the selfish course, as to how we may be all things to all men, and yet may hold our own and be the stronger for it.

If you desire to be sympathetic to others perhaps the best rule that you can start with is not to feel too tenderly for yourself. Nothing makes us so hard towards others as being too sensitive for ourselves. The littlenesses of a shrinking self-consciousness, the shivering attitude of self-defence which comes from being doubtful of our own dignity, the exaggerated tenderness of vanity which sees a reflection upon itself in every glance—all these make it impossible to expand ourselves into that genial thoughtfulness for other people which makes life in the best sense, diffusive. Simplicity is the

best of foundations on which our sympathy can be based. If we learn to forget ourselves, we shall soon find that we are in sympathy with others. When we cease to be interesting to ourselves it is wonderful how interesting we find our neighbours.

Then, remember that sentimentality and real sympathy are the polar opposites of one another. People can tell at the first moment of contact whether we feel for them with a genuine interest, or whether we wish, as it were, to dramatise their needs, to act a play with them to save us from ennui; whether we wish to share their lives as true brethren, or to make capital of them to enrich our own sensations. We must beware, then, lest our proffer of sympathy be only a subtil selfishness in disguise.

Again, intensity of affection for a few ought to open out our hearts towards all others. I know that this is where we fail so sadly often. We sometimes see — and it is a melancholy sight—how those who have most to be thankful for in the happiness of their own home circle, seem to limit the expansiveness of their

hearts by the bounds of their more immediate surroundings. It ought not to be so, and it need not. Nay, there are those who have first had their hearts opened to become all that they might be to many others, because they have gained a new capacity for affection by expending what they had upon one object. We ought to watch ourselves in the use of all our treasures of affection, of friendship, of home happiness, and see that their deep power of blessing is not allowed to begin and end with our own circle; for each brings a twofold capacity of enlarging our circle of sympathy. We learn from it to rejoice with them that do rejoice; we learn to weep with those that weep; for there is nothing which more enlarges our sympathy than to have learnt to use suffering aright. Each tender, wounded spot in your own heart, nay, each weakness, as the world calls it, in your armour is a point at which others may enter in to share your life, to be blest and to bless. We must be mindful that there are many, many ways in which our weakness may

be found to be our truest strength if our lives are being lived for other people. It is God's amends to us for many a pang that it leaves us weaker, and therefore stronger for sympathy.

And in conclusion—that to which all has led up—there is but one element, one atmosphere in which the highest forms of sympathy can be developed. There is but one sphere in which all men meet as equals, one fellowship that knits all into one. It is in the heart, in the Communion of Jesus Christ that we must embrace the world in the range of our affections. There only do we learn what sympathy can be; there only does contact with our fellows rise above what alloys or degrades it, leave behind all sordidness, all selfishness. His great prayer for those who should belong to Him was, that all might be one in God, that the world might know that God had sent Him. He, then, is not only the Exemplar of all that sympathy can do, He is also the mystical sphere in which the closest of human bonds are contracted. Common fellowship with One who has given us all, with

One who in giving us Himself has given all that we can know of best and highest, common interest in a common salvation, common aims after the same grand ideals, common hopes of the attainment of the same blessedness—it is in these that our fellowship with one another can alone find its perfect development. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." In that fellowship we meet with one another, nay, we more than meet with one another; we are made all one in Christ. The same power of doing and of suffering belongs to all who are members of the same Saviour. They have not merely fellowship in strength; the same strength is tingling in the nerves of each. They have not merely unity of aspiration; the same Spirit in the hearts of all the faithful aspires in throes of Divine endeavour after union with the same Lord of love. Through the veins of each soul that believes, and that, believing, reaches out to take hold, there is coursing

the blood of the new life implanted in each by the same Lord. And this sympathy, this union in Christ, not death itself brings to an end. From across the stream which separates us now, there passes back to us in the Communion of Saints the manifold, measureless strength which belongs to the Body of Christ. From all there goes up the one prayer, Thy Kingdom come, O Lord. And in that hastening to the consummation of all things, the departed take hold of us here and now. In the expanse of this infinite vision of the brotherhood of all the redeemed, in this sense of one life in the same Saviour, all the pettiness and the selfishness of each heart may be sublimated into a self-sacrificing readiness to take one's place, and no more than one's own place in the great common struggle after higher things.

Then draw we nearer, day by day,
  Each to his brethren, all to God;
Let the world take us as she may,
  We must not change our road.
Not wondering, though in grief to find
The martyr's foe still keep her mind;
But fixed to hold love's banner fast,
And by submission win at last.

TIME AND ETERNITY.

Jesus answered, I must work the work of Him that sent Me while it is day. The night cometh in which no man can work.—*St. John* ix. 4.

WE are told that through the streets of Verona, in the early years of the fourteenth century, there used to pass a stern-faced, silent stranger, at whom women were seen to point trembling fingers and say, "Look, there goes the man who has been in hell." So vividly had the facts of the other world been embodied in the great poem of Dante, that his name will be associated in all ages with the thought of how the deeds of the present life are what will fix a man's fate to eternity. Yet the stern poet who wrote the *Inferno* did but catch the critical moment of a whole grand cycle of human thought, did but lend a voice, as

has often been said, to the thoughts of many silent centuries. The period which closed with the fourteenth century was as emphatically the age of the next life as our own century is the age of the present world. The deep shadow of death and of coming judgment brooded awfully and continually upon it. The thought of these gave an added solemnity to the sombre side of human existence, it lent an awful irony to men's humour, and, alas! it added piquancy and sting to the debaucheries which were so appallingly rife. It frowns down upon us still in the present day from the fronts of their time-stained cathedrals. It glimmers in mystic radiance through the marvel of their storied glass. It confronts us in shuddering reality in the allegorical frescoes of their cemeteries. It flashes out on us in gorgeous gilding from the pages of their illuminated breviaries. It thunders in their terrible *dies iræ*, and it sighs in the mute pathos of their inscriptions. It sounds in the echoing cloisters where communities meditated upon it. It dies away in the cells of the solitaries who brooded over

it in the stillness of the mountains. For those who would live godly in that day were too fain to flee from the world that they might devote themselves to the thought of the other life. And even those who were bound fast by earthly ties were taught that their best hopes of final blessedness were to be found in the degree of detachment with which they could sit loose to things present, and occupy themselves with the contemplation of things to come. Nay, there were those whose first object it was to make all things bitter to themselves on earth that they might have thought for the next world alone.

The century in which our own lot is cast is as emphatically the age of the present, as that was the age of the future life. The exuberance of our material prosperity, our insight into, and our mastery over nature, all tend to diminish the sense of mystery which enwrapped the medieval mind. Our horizon is so much wider that the eye is more content to range within it. We are not encountered on every hand by the Inexplicable as the men

of that day were; the element of mystery lies at a greater distance, has less place among the details of our lives. And so we are disposed to make "conduct" the all in all of our spiritual system. And by "*conduct*," I mean our actions in themselves apart from any conscious referring of them to a Power ever present, though unseen. I mean acts as they bear on present welfare, and that welfare such as we can measure with rule and line. Where Christ told us to love God above all, and our neighbour as ourselves, we are apt to make our code of morality begin and end with kindness to our neighbour. Thou shalt serve and love society with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, for thou and thy neighbour live now, and thou knowest not what shall be hereafter — such I think is the first and great commandment of much of our modern morality. And the second is exactly of a piece with it: thou shalt cultivate thy character here with all that can make life beautiful and enjoyable, for thine eyes will soon close into

darkness, and what if they shall open no more?

If we compare the medieval ideal with that which I have quoted as our own, we shall not find that the standard of the Gospel is accurately approximated to by either. Nay, I am not sure but that, in some ways at least, the medieval was farther from the mark.

No doubt a certain awe and solemnity was communicated to men's conceptions of life by the solemn shadow of the imminent hereafter which was cast so constantly athwart it. But if it brought awe to those who heeded it, it added recklessness to those who did not. The "last things" fell into something of the contempt which familiarity proverbially brings. In the terrible works of art which I have mentioned, there is often a certain ghastly humour blended closely with their tragic intensity. And there can be no doubt about the added excitement which accrued to debauchery and self-indulgence from the thought of their flagrant contradiction of that which was so firmly believed. We have read in one of the

cleverest passages in one of the cleverest books of our time, how the grim old voluptuary-turned-cynic lamented over the decay of religion because, he said, vice had become vulgarised; because those who lived in self-indulgence had lost the most piquant of their pleasures, that of slapping current morality in the face. And this is but the modern burlesque of what was a real feeling in the middle ages. The orgies, which were so fiercely denounced by the great preachers of the Church of that day, must have derived a gathered intensity from the way in which those who indulged in them were surrounded by the thought of the other world, and of the retribution which awaited them hereafter. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die; yes, and on the morrow of to-morrow go to judgment. In the face of that, they said, let us enjoy ourselves. It is of the very essence of the humorous licentiousness which abounds in the literature of the Renaissance, that it was written for those who believed intensely in the life—or the death—beyond the grave. And again, it was the absorption in the other world,

the current contempt for this life, as *the* feature of the religion of the day, which accounted, in some measure at least, for the indifference to human suffering in the present, which was so awfully characteristic of the middle ages. The feeling that the world ought to be nothing to you leads more easily to indifference about others than to stern renunciation of self.

So far, then, as to live more in the present may lessen some incentives to recklessness, and may suggest some motives for philanthropy, we need not think that the age in which we live stands altogether at a disadvantage in the comparison. We are less tolerant of any form of piety which does not find expression in practice. We see that God is to be sought in the world, not the world to be fled from for God; that the future is to be earned in the present by complying with every claim that it has upon us; that love to our neighbour whom we have seen, is the best expression of love to God whom we have not seen. And so far our greater secularity compares favourably with the mistakes of former piety.

What, then, is the truer ideal for us to set before ourselves as Christian men? Surely this, that to live for Christ now in serving Him in the person of His followers, nay, that to live for the Redeemer of all men by living for those who do not know Him, is the only real training for our souls against the future that awaits us beyond the grave. Let us make "conduct" our ideal if we will, but let us include in our definition of "conduct," the one motive which alone is worth living for, the showing forth before God and before men our gratitude to the Redeemer who died for us. Let us live for the other world by all means, but let us remember that living for the other world means before all things, exactness and diligence in discharging the duties of the present, means devoting the best energies of our being to making life happy for others, and helping them towards the life everlasting. Let us set culture before us as a grand ideal, if we include in our definition of culture the training of what is highest within us, the power of loving God and of loving man in the measure in which Jesus loved us.

In the life of the greatest philanthropist who has served the common cause in our own time there is a passage which touched me to the very quick. After Lady Shaftesbury had been taken from her husband, he wrote in one of his intimate diaries these, to me, most moving words: "Blessed, precious wife, some of thy last words, spoken in health and happiness, while the shadow of death was not even before thine eyes, spoken in sorrow of some infidel and cruel expressions, were, 'and this, too, when He died for us.'"

My friends, could we not put the thought before us when we are tempted to negligence or to sin: "and this, too, when He died for us"? The holy woman of whom her husband recorded them spoke the words about the wrong-doing of others—that the reason why it pained her so intensely to hear words against God and against man was because she remembered when she heard them, that they were spoken against One who gave His life for the speaker and for those of whom he spoke. But could we not all apply them to ourselves? Could we

not make them a watchword of conduct? Could we not take them as a connecting link between the life that we live here upon earth and the hereafter which awaits us beyond the grave—"and this, too, when He died for us"? How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God, "and this, too, when He died for us"? How can I live in sloth and indifference when my Saviour gave Himself for my salvation? How can this world be my all when in the next I may see Him who so died? How shall I not think of this world as the preparation for the world beyond the grave, whither I am beckoned by a crucified Hand? How shall the next world be anything else to me than an incentive to well-doing now, when all the value of the inheritance which is to come shall consist in the absolute possession of Him for whom this life is to be lived?

Would it not help us to bear the sorrows of the present if we remembered not only that there is a world to come, but that everything which most tries us on earth is but a stretching forth from beyond the veil, of the very Hand

which was pierced for our sakes, to make us partakers of His sufferings?

Be assured that only by living thus, by remembering how the Crucified of earth is waiting to welcome us in heaven, that He calls us to share in His Cross, to take it upon our shoulders for ourselves, to lighten it from off the shoulders of others, only so can we bring the two worlds into that intimate relation to one another which will round off the ideal of the Gospel so missed in opposite directions by the mistakes of different ages. The Cross spans the space between heaven and earth. The Cross reduces this world to its true value, the Cross is what enables us to estimate it in terms which belong to a higher order. Stamp the Cross upon the things of this life, upon the dearest of them as well as upon the commonest. Accept the Cross as He stamps it upon them, nay, learn to think of this as their deepest value, that they are that which make His special opportunity for assimilating thee through suffering to Himself. And thou shalt find that the shadow of eternity shall indeed fall across the present life, but only to

tone down its gaudy colours, and to reduce them to the harmony of clear vision. Nay, thou shalt find that its *light* falls athwart them, and that then do they shine truest to thine eyes when they are seen as eternity makes thee think of them. For "infinite, imminent eternity" casts its shadow or its light upon the present. We are living for it, live as we will. Each act of our will in the present is reducing it, and reducing it for ever, to conformity to God's will or to the opposite, to fitness or to unfitness for His presence. And if this life is thus ever being projected upon the larger field of the next, if the future be but a magnified present in which all that we say and do now will return upon us with multiplied intensity, then surely we must live for that future in our every act and thought. If all eternity were offered you as a reward, you might not neglect one duty in order to gain time to prepare for it. The preparation is to do every duty for His sake who reigns in eternity, remembering that doing it for Him is the only true preparation for that which lies before you hereafter; that con-

scientiousness as in the sight of Almighty God is what alone can train you for His presence; that carelessness or half-heartedness in your duty renders you absolutely unfit for that presence.

* Such thoughts must have been forced home to our minds by the events of the last few days. A brilliant and successful career of duty has been suddenly closed before our eyes. The Councils by which this Presidency is guided have been deprived of a wise, mature judgment, trained by long experience on the Bench to view all that affected the public weal with a calm, judicial impartiality. One whose sagacity had all the penetration which belonged to high natural ability, and all the width of view which had developed through varied experience, will no longer labour hard and think deep at the problems by which Governments are exercised in administering the affairs of a subject people. The kindliness that won so many hearts, and the

* Preached at Poona on the day after the funeral of Sir Maxwell Melvill, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Second Member of Council of the Governor of Bombay.

justice which commanded such confidence have alike become things of the past as far as we and our fellow-subjects are concerned. The task had been increasingly important, and the world knew that it had been ably discharged. The calls of duty had been cheerfully responded to, and the reward had not been wanting.

As we rendered the last due honours to one who had deserved well of the State, I think the thought must have been present to many minds, how we were standing on the frontiers of two worlds. The work and the rewards of the visible we all had had before our eyes. Towards all that lies before us in the unseen our thoughts must surely have travelled forward. The lesson must have come home to some among us: do that which lies before you upon earth with the recollection ever present to your mind that you are working not for this world alone, but for that which lies behind the dark veil. Let your career be brilliant or obscure as far as earth and its rewards are concerned, it leads alike to the one great account where you will not be asked what were your abilities, but whether you used

them as in God's sight; not whether your opportunities were great, but whether, being such as they were, you remembered that one day they must be accounted for.

A LIVING HOLD UPON CHRISTIANITY THE SAFEGUARD AGAINST AGNOSTICISM.

Because we thus judge that if One died for all, then did all die ; and that He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.—2 *Corinthians* v. 15.

WHAT are the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ to you and me? I do not intend to discuss this great question in the details of its theological bearings, to inquire how it is that these great events have altered the relations of heaven and earth. Nor do I intend to appeal to you directly on the personal bearings of the question. Though I shall ask you to say honestly to yourselves whether they are to you all that they ought to be, in

the sense of having been appropriated for your salvation; still the question, am I saving my soul by them? is not that which I desire primarily to put before you.

I desire to show you how the attitude which you take up towards the great issues which divide modern thought depend ultimately upon your personal attitude towards the death and resurrection of your Saviour.

Those great issues are both moral and intellectual. They include not only such spiritual questions as our belief in a standard of right and wrong communicated to the world by Almighty God, but such questions of apparently pure philosophy as that, whether such beings as we are really know, or are capable of knowing anything except the impressions upon our organs of sensation, their sequence and their associations with one another.

Now is it the case that upon questions such as these our attitude is, and ought to be affected by the bearings of Christ's death and resurrection upon the personal life of our spirits?

Our first impulse, it may be, when we ask that question, is to say that its ultimate decision must be matter of pure speculative reasoning, to be thought out like a problem in mathematics. But we shall find, if we look carefully at it, that in dealing with the deepest problems of all it is impossible to make a sharp demarcation between their moral and their speculative bearings, that the beliefs or disbeliefs of every one of us, not least the beliefs and disbeliefs of those who pretend most loudly to impartiality, are influenced far more deeply than we think for by our attitude about spiritual matters.

What, then, are the two possible alternatives to thoughtful, reverent-minded men and women as they read, and as they realise to themselves the history of Christ's death and resurrection? They must be to us one of two things: mere past history, or living present fact.

I suppose that the death of the great Teacher has been to each of us a high exemplar of passive heroism, has been one of the moving

episodes of human history, one of those stories the reading of which has left us morally richer for all our lives; that it has enlarged our conceptions of human nature, and of its capacities for rising to all demands which injury or which suffering can make upon it; that it has shown us how intense force of character can co-exist with tender sympathy and considerateness, how all that is most manly in active life can be wedded to quiet, dignified endurance, how concentrated personal devotion can rise superior to such narrowness and exclusiveness as would shut out the very lowest from being understood.

And in like manner with the story of the Resurrection, we can all enter into its pathos as a narrative, into the joyful surprise of the mourning women, into the revulsion in the feelings of the Apostles, into the tenderness of the Master Himself for the incredulity of faithful affection whose very eagerness made it dread to be deceived, into the pardon accorded to lowly penitence, into the promises and encouragements given to all.

But our attitude towards the problems of the day depends not upon its being all this to us, but on the question whether it is not much more.

The death and the rising again of our Saviour ought to be the prototype, and the actual efficient cause of a similar death and rising in our own hearts. In Him we must have died to ourselves, to the supremacy, nay, to the impulses of our lower nature, in so far as those impulses are unholy. In Him we must be crucified to the world, so as not to be carried away by its activities or whirled along in the mad round of its excitements! We must rather be raised aloft as it sweeps past us, displayed to its misunderstanding and its derision, crucified because we "are not for its turn, but are clean contrary to its doings." And in Christ we must be raised to a new life, so that "we live, yet not we but Christ liveth in us." That life must be the fact of all facts to us, something pervading our every thought and our every action. It must not simply be another name for our own resolves and for the per-

sistency with which we act them out. It must be something received from above, acted out in the sphere of our conduct by the God-given persistency of a good will, but still *His* in its essence and its origin, and *His* in its exercise as well. As we acknowledge in the Collect for Easter Day, when our hearts are full of the appropriation of His risen life, we must depend upon the Father of Jesus Christ not only by His "special grace preventing us" to "put into our minds good desires," but also "by His continual help" to enable us to "bring the same to good effect."

The death and the rising again of Jesus Christ must, then, be one of these two things to every one of us, mere past history, or living, present fact. Past history of course they must be when we regard them as external to ourselves. The question is, are they also operative within us, or do they appeal to us simply as narrative?

And according to the alternative which we are adopting we shall be enlisted on one side or on the other in the greatest of all the contro-

versies of the day, the controversy between Agnosticism and Christianity. On what Jesus Christ is to each of us in His death and in His rising from the grave, will it depend whether we can look upon the Gospel as a system still essentially living, or as passing into obsolescence and decrepitude.

For it is a law of man's progress throughout the ages that every system invented by humankind for the satisfaction of their own moral needs has its day, and is superseded, and passes away. Nay, it is a part of the tragic element in history that in proportion as such a system has done good work by helping forward one stage of man's development, so, at last, when it has been outgrown and has become useless, does its survival prove a bar to farther progress.

Just as we see in individual life that nothing is more fatal to people's usefulness—nay, that nothing is more detrimental to their neighbours—than that any one should continue to grasp at power after the time for its healthy exercise has passed away, so it is with out-

worn systems and institutions. They impose a yoke of mere empty words and phrases, which crush thought in the time of their decrepitude as effectually as they stimulated it in their first freshness; they drag on a contemptible existence in empty, outward ceremonies and forms, from which all spiritual significance has evaporated; their vested interests batten like vampires upon the resources of generations which they do not serve. Yet because they once were so potent for good, the world refuses finally to break with them; though if the world but understood its own position, it would see that true gratitude for past services would rather dictate that the system which rendered them should be reverently embalmed and hidden away, than that it should be worshipped in its unreverend dotage, as though it still had a mastery over men's spirits.

Now, one portion of the world of the present day is never tired of impressing it upon us that Christianity has passed into this stage; that if it desires to consummate the immense

services which it has rendered to mankind in the past, it is bound to retire before Agnosticism, to acknowledge that its day has come and gone, to cease to make demands upon our understanding, which is unable to accept its first principles, to roll away its worn-out ideals to make room for another system which is superseding it.

What do I mean, then, by Agnosticism and by Christianity, the two systems between which we have to choose?

By Agnosticism I mean taking it for granted that the things which our senses make known to us are all that we know or ever can know with the faculties which we find at our disposal; that changes in the impressions on eye and ear, and on each of our organs of sensation, are the beginning and the end of all knowledge; that we infer, and are compelled to infer, that these changes will follow a certain order because they always have done so in the past; but that the fact of those changes and of their order is the beginning, and must be the end, of all knowledge; that

the question of the existence of another world, or of anything supernatural in this world, is one which it is mere folly to inquire about; that whether such exist or do not exist, at any rate it is impossible that we should become conscious of it, because there is no adequate evidence from which we can infer its existence.

Such is Agnosticism on its intellectual side. And on its moral side it comes to this: that right and wrong are but another form of expression for what has proved itself social or anti-social; that our belief that they are anything but this comes simply from inherited predisposition, from which it is difficult to get clear; that certain things, at a certain stage of human development, conduced powerfully to the preservation and the consolidation of the group of beings from whom we are descended, so that those who observed them survived, and those who neglected them died out; that hence it comes that the doing of these things has been imposed upon successive generations, until at last they have become engrained in our very fibre, until we exact

them from others as our rights and accept them ourselves as our duties.

Christianity, on its intellectual side, asserts that we not only know, but have relations, and those of a deeply personal kind, with One who has created and redeemed us, and has given us a revelation of Himself; that this knowledge is no set of abstract principles acquiesced in or firmly believed in, but lies deep at the very roots of our moral being; that it is gained by His direct revelation communicated to the moral sense of His creatures; that it is retained by dint of faithfulness to its requirements, and may be lost if it is not acted out. And we believe that over and above the revelation which has been communicated once for all to the Church there is granted a store of daily grace, by which that revelation may be taken advantage of.

The Gospel teaches us that what we call right and wrong do indeed bring happiness and unhappiness to ourselves and to the race that we belong to; but it teaches us that these consequences of our actions are not that which

renders them right or wrong, but are the *result* of the original distinction imposed by the Nature of Almighty God; that sin means outrage on His Holiness, base ingratitude of a creature to its Creator; that right means conformity by finite beings to laws which have been imposed by the Infinite.

Now on which side in the deadly struggle between these systems you and I are ultimately to be found, depends upon the question which I began with, of what is our personal attitude towards the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Once more, these are either mere past history to us, or else they are living, present facts; either our actual point of contact with the supernatural, through which, in prayer and in sacraments, we keep touch with the facts of another world: or else the death of Christ is but an episode in the history of one obscure nation, and His resurrection, we shall probably conclude, is a fable to be believed by no wise man.

For if we do not actually keep touch with the

supernatural by the appropriation of these great facts into our lives, then be sure that our ultimate tendency is towards the negations which I have indicated, towards the dethroning of historical Christianity and the erection of a new system in its place. The influence of early associations, or the want of a stern logical faculty may prevent many of us from arriving intellectually at the conclusions which follow from our moral attitude. But, all the same, we are contributing our little quota to the final disintegration of the system. For if Christianity be not still a living power to transform the hearts and lives of its votaries by the infusion of something from another world ; if it imply to us no personal contact with things of another order than the earthly ; if while we profess to be followers of the Crucified, we are conformed to that world which is His enemy ; if saying that we live by His life, we yet allow it to count for nothing in our conduct, then we become living examples in our own persons of all that its depravers assert of it, namely that it is a system which has had its day and is passing

away, that it is no longer a living power in the world.

Now its whole claim to dominion over men's consciences, its right to pronounce upon their beliefs comes simply from its being such a power. Because it is capable of imparting to us a moral force which does not come to us by nature; because it does not simply tell us what is right, does not stop even at furnishing us with motives, but goes on to supply the force for acting up to them; in a word, because it is morally supernatural, it claims to have a place in human life from which no progress and no discovery can dethrone it. It tells us of the existence of other knowledge than that which is derived through the senses. And it does not do so on merely speculative grounds as a system of spiritual philosophy. It claims no less than to bring us actually into contact with the powers of another world than our own.

And on our true, experimental acquaintance with those powers and of the world to which they belong, will turn the question whether we believe in their existence. We are so far

permeated with the spirit of our own day in its thirst for demonstration of facts, that we shall believe in these so-called facts of a higher order just so far as we have actually experienced them.

Take hold of them, make them real to yourself, live a life pervaded by their power, fix the eye of your faith on the risen Saviour and so learn that He has power to transform you, and you shall find that the existence of another world, its reality, its connection with this life will be to you the most real of all facts, that you are as ready to be reasoned out of one of your senses as to be deprived by argument of your hold on the supernatural.

But once let them cease to be real to you in the sense of exercising a vital power over your conduct, and you will begin to find that there is much to be said on the side of the Agnostic conclusions. Regarded simply as a speculative system, I believe Agnosticism absolutely to break down. I join issue upon the first principle with which it starts, as to the derivation of all knowledge from sensation. Still, regarded as a

speculative system it is at least arguable, tenable by enlightened thinkers. It is when you approach it from the side of the spirit that it so utterly and so irremediably breaks down. It is when you *know* the facts of the other order that it becomes inconceivable to you that the tangible is the one and all.

And again, on your strenuous doing of what is right does it depend whether the moral system of Christianity shall have such hold on you that you cannot give it up, or acknowledge that it can ever be superseded. If you have carried out the Commandments of God, or are striving earnestly, with all your failings, to give effect to them, then you shall find that it is inconceivable to you that what we call the moral law of the Most High is but a sanction bestowed by superstition upon the dictates of social expediency. What you have done in the power of the Holy Ghost you will not readily come to regard as being the outgrowth of nothing higher than race-experience.

I repeat it that on grounds of pure reason we are prepared to deny the first principles on

which the system of Agnosticism is built up. Still, practically, our hold upon Christianity depends on our giving effect day by day to the living power of our Saviour Jesus Christ who died for us and rose again. For the system is a spiritual system and can be grasped but by a spiritual hold. Nay, the Person is a spiritual Person and must be communicated with by spiritual agencies.

For, at last, when all is said and done, what does all our religion amount to, save that to those who believe in the resurrection, Christ risen is Christianity, and Christianity is Christ the risen Lord; that "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again"?

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND THE RESTORATION OF HIS SERVANTS.

Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.—*St. John* ii. 19.

THE words form part of one of the typical narratives in which St. John brings before us directly some incident in the life of His Master which the writers of the earlier Gospels had taken for granted that their readers were aware of.

The Church had learnt from St. Matthew and St. Mark that Christ was charged at the bar of the High Priest with having said that He would "destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days would build another made without hands." Christians knew how He was taunted on the Cross with the words which He was

supposed to have thus spoken: "Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it up in three days, save Thyself and come down from the Cross."

And when St. John took in hand to supplement what his predecessors had told about their Master, He gave the incident which had elicited the saying thus tortured into a charge of irreverence. At the beginning of His public ministration, Christ had cleansed the Temple of God of the traffic by which it had been desecrated. And when He was asked for His authority for so doing, He had replied with a mystical saying which no one had understood at the time, but which His disciples treasured up in their memories and interpreted in the light of the resurrection. He had told them of another, a living Temple over which He had absolute authority, the Temple of His own human Body. "Destroy this temple," He had said, "and in three days I will raise it up."

In what sense was Christ's Body a Temple?

It is a common phrase in describing human nature, to call the body the shrine of the spirit.

Our humanity containing, as it does, two elements, one spiritual, the other corporal, and these two being separable by death, so that the body is left a lifeless thing, no longer animated by the soul which had been united to it, we speak with poetical licence, of the outward, the material part of us, as the shrine which has been indwelt by the spirit.

Was it in this sense that Christ spoke of His Body, when He bid them "destroy this temple," and asserted that in three days He could raise it up? Was the actual upraising of His Body when the three days in the grave had been accomplished, but the re-entry of His holy human Soul into the abode which had been desecrated upon the Cross? We must look for a meaning in His words which needs no such licence to justify it, a meaning far deeper and more literal than the metaphor which treats body and spirit as related to each other in this way. For, when we look at it, the body of a human being is not really so separable from the spirit as that the part of us which we believe to be immaterial can be said in a

literal way to *inhabit* the body which is its associate. The two are, in our experience, so united, so essential to one another's completeness, that we cannot fully picture the human spirit as existing apart from its body. That it can so exist we believe, but whenever we would picture it to ourselves as it exists in its disembodied condition, we find that we are irresistibly led on to attribute to it powers and senses which have invariably, in our experience of this world, been exercised through the body. And indeed, it is no accident of the human spirit to be associated with a body of this earth. We dare not call it a mere inhabitant of the body, because so to call it would imply that in its nature it is independent of that in which it resides; whereas we know that not the union, but the separation is that which, as it were, is accidental to it. Its condition as divorced from the body is abnormal, temporal, penal. It is its embodiment in a form of flesh and blood which is connatural to it, which is essential to its completeness, which furnishes it with that

"formula," as it has been called, by which not only does it communicate with other beings, but by which it discharges its proper functions. When Christ told us that His Body was a Temple, His words had a literal signification which goes deeper than that figurative sense in which the body which is thus congenital to our spirit, is appropriately spoken of as its shrine.

But there is a sense in which the body of every one of us is, or may be a temple of a higher presence. If it cannot properly be called the temple of the human spirit along with which it entered on its existence, because a shrine and the inhabitant of the shrine are properly not one being but two, yet the bodies within which God deigns to dwell may be spoken of as temples of the most High, because in this sense, the shrine and the inhabitant are really two separate beings. Did Christ speak, then, of His Body as a Temple, in the same sense in which we sinful beings are made temples of God the Holy Ghost dwelling in us in virtue of our baptism? Was

each of us when we were borne from the font a temple of God the Holy Ghost in the same sense in which Jesus of Nazareth asserted that His Body was a Temple?

Unquestionably, each one of the baptized is the Temple of God the Holy Ghost till he forfeits that blessed indwelling by aggravated negligence or deadly sin. But this tabernacling of God within our hearts is a something which is communicated to us from without by an act of God's infinite condescension. It does not belong to us from our birth, but is communicated to us by the agency of Holy Church, and by the fulfilment of our Saviour's command. It can be forfeited, alas! by our own acts, so that the fact that we at one time possessed it may become but the most damning indictment which can overwhelm us before the bar of Divine judgment.

Christ's Body was the Temple of God by a right indefeasible and inalienable. It was such from the first moment of its existence; it shall be such through the ages of eternity as none other ever has been or can be.

For the Being who displayed Himself to the world as the carpenter and prophet of Galilee, is One to whose original existence neither body nor soul was essential. Both these were assumed by Him in time, but His essential Existence is eternal. To all eternity the Body which was crucified shall belong to Him on the throne of His glory where He displays Himself as the "Lamb that had been slain." To all eternity will He sympathise with His own in virtue of His possessing the human Soul which bore the agony in the Garden and on the Cross. Yet neither part of our human constitution was His till He willed to assume it. His Body and His Soul both alike are the Temple of God made Man, are a temple in a sense in which our bodies are not literally a temple for our souls, because in this case the Dweller in the Temple existed before the Shrine came into being. To God the Word, His human body and human soul are truly and essentially *a habitation.* One moment, He was pure Spirit as He had ever been, existing in the bosom

of the Father with the changeless existence of eternity. Another moment and He had associated with Himself both constituents of our complex human nature. "The Word was made flesh," we are told, "and tabernacled," encamped, "among us." It is true that the Humanity which He indwells is inseparably united to His Divine Person, but it was united by the act of His own will, as something in which He stooped to become incarnate, not as anything which was essential to His existence. United as are two natures in His Person, so that it were heresy to think of His Humanity as existing apart from His Divinity, still, even in the complex Person of the Son of Man, the two natures are eternally distinct. The soul and body of Jesus of Nazareth are the Temple of God made Man.

And so it was that, being challenged by His enemies to show proof that in cleansing the Temple he had acted within His authority, He tells them that He has power over another Temple more sacred than the shrine of their forefathers. He challenges them to wreak upon

His Body the malice which had dictated their question, and tells them that His power over that Body, to raise it up after three days from the dead, shall show that the shrine of their ancient worship was His to be dealt with as He would. If He had power to raise up that other Shrine, even the Body in which God had become Man, much more might He expel from the sacred precincts the authors of the desecration which had befallen it.

It is to commemorate His redemption of that pledge that we have met in His presence this evening. As yesterday, the living Temple of God the Word was lying desecrated by the malice of His enemies. The holy Soul in which God sympathises with His creatures was fled to the abode of the departed. The holy Body in which God was still incarnate was, in the interval from Friday till Sunday, lying long, and cold, and still in the sepulchre which charity had afforded it.

> No motion has *He* now, no force ;
> *He* neither hears nor sees ;
> Borne round in earth's diurnal course,
> With rocks, and stones, and trees.—

thus, but yesterday, did it seem to His disciples that the course of their Master was ended. As to-day, they remembered what He had said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Because that Body which lay in Joseph's tomb was in very deed the Temple of God, He burst the bands of death. Nay, we know that "it was impossible that He should be holden of them."

What word of Easter joy and consolation comes to us from Christ's pledge and its fulfilment? What difference does it make to every one of us to know that, when the enemies of Jesus Christ had wreaked their vengeance in the blood of their denunciator, His Body did not moulder in the grave, but arose to live on to eternity?

Think, first, of the spiritual resurrection which He is able to effect for His people. Even supposing that our souls are "twice dead"; if, after being spiritually made alive by union with Him in our baptism, we are lying in the grave of our own selfishness, wrapped round in the grave-clothes of inaction,

unable even to long for resurrection because we are spiritually dead—even so, He who rose on the third day is more than able to raise us to life.

To all appearance the last hope has been forfeited ; there is nothing to indicate the possibility that life can be enkindled afresh in a soul which has ceased to long after it. And yet even for a soul which is thus dead, there is hope in the resurrection of Jesus. And if there be but a single spark of desire for it—a longing so feeble, perhaps, that, to the soul which is desiring better things, it seems as though the power of attaining to them had been forfeited once and for ever—then be assured that the resurrection of Jesus Christ makes it certain that even in such there lie dormant unbounded possibilities. Only One who has died and risen again would believe that such a soul could be raised up. But a Master who gave Himself for it, to die that it might live ; a Master who, rising from the dead, triumphed over the evil powers which have ensnared it, such a Saviour admits nothing to be impossible for any one soul for which He lives.

It has not any power of its own ; its energies have been exhausted upon evil. To restore it we say is impossible. But what He offers is not restoration; it is life, His own life from the dead.

Is there any other message which comes to us from the grave from which Jesus has risen up?

Let those say who, over the resting-places of their loved ones, have listened to the words of joyful cheer with which we leave their bodies in the dust. Even we, Christian people as we are, often feel, as we strain our eyes into the darkness, how little has been actually revealed to us about the future of ourselves and of our beloved. But of one thing at least we are assured when we commit the loved remains to the dust and turn back to our desolated homes: "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him." At least we know that the dissolution of soul and body is not a dissolution to eternity. At least we know as we dream of a future meeting, that the

being who, so we dearly trust, shall be restored to us in the kingdom of the risen Master, shall be no unsubstantial phantom, never more to be recognised by the very tokens which we associate with the happiness of the past. When they were here, if we loved them in the Lord Jesus, we know that even the bodies of our beloved were the temples of God the Holy Ghost. And we are told in the glowing language of St. Paul about the future of those who are Christ's, that "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." We do well to keep sternly before ourselves the condition of that glorious resurrection. It is—"if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you." But, granted the fulfilment of this condition; if the presence which was communicated at the font has not been finally and obstinately forfeited; in a word, "if the Spirit of God dwell within us," then the body which has been the shrine of that indwelling

may moulder among the clods of our last resting-place, yet never, to the ages of ages, will God fail to restore it in glory. There hangs a halo over the resting-place of the Christian dead. There float around it the echoes of the blessed words with which we commit them to the earth. And those words are not spoken of any future in which the body shall want its due part. It belonged to Jesus Christ while it was with us; it belongs to Him so long as it is in being. Yes, and after it has ceased to exist, has been absorbed into the materials of this earth, has been used up, it may be, a thousand times in the formation of other human beings, yet still there is a future before it, in virtue of its union with the Spirit. How God will give us bodies again after the constituents of these bodies shall have been dissipated—this lies, and must lie beyond our ken. But the life that shall be lived to eternity shall be no disembodied existence—this we know because Jesus rose again.

Destroy this temple, He said, and in three days I will raise it up. Thus He spoke of the

Temple of *His* own Body. Thus He spake of the soul and body of every Christian who should ever be the shrine of the Holy Ghost. Not after three days, or after three centuries, nor, it may be, after three centuries of centuries, but at least in His own appointed time, there shall come that rising of soul and body of which His own rising was the first-fruits. He quickened us first in our baptism though born in original sin. He quickens us again through repentance when that life which He gave has been forfeited. And the soul being thus raised to life, the raising of the body which enshrines it must follow as a matter of course. If the sin which brought the curse be done away, then the death which is the shadow of the sin can no longer keep its hold on the redeemed.

REALISATION OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

In Him we live and move and have our being.—*Acts* xvii. 28.

IT has been said by a great spiritual writer that God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves, that His possession of us is so intimate and so complete, if we yield ourselves to His influence over us, that He becomes the most pervading of powers in the regulation of the lives which are given up to Him. But, indeed, whether we yield ourselves or not, He is there very close to us, all around us. His presence has been compared to the ocean in which, supported by which, the countless creatures which people its depths are suspended during the whole of their existence. Or, again, it has been compared to

the atmosphere, impalpable yet essential to our very being, invisible in itself, yet the medium through which we see all other things.

It is the simplest, the most elementary of truths, the first, perhaps, of the truths about God which became, as it were, a part of ourselves, a portion of that mental equipment the first acquisition of which no effort of memory can recall. Where is God? we asked, awe-struck, of our parents. And we were told: God is everywhere, my child; there is no place where God is not. Simplest, therefore deepest, most inexhaustible. The awed senses of childhood drank it in. We learnt, perhaps, more of its solemnity from the tone in which our question was answered than from the words, though we thought that we understood them. And as we ponder them in the fulness of our manhood, we still find that their power to overawe us is greater than our power to apprehend them. It is the truth that lays hold upon us, rather than we that have laid hold of the mighty truth.

My words can add nothing to its significance: we can but pass, as it were, from side to side of

it, and try to look at it in different aspects. God grant that as we do so together its power over our lives may be intensified!

A word, first, about its comforting power. We can go nowhere, we can never be so situated as that exile from Him should be possible. Our chief good we carry everywhere about with us.

To have an inner world of our own where we can be alone with what is dearer to us than life; a world into which nothing can ever penetrate to break up the intimacy which prevails there; a world where vicissitude cannot enter to deprive us of what we most treasure—what is this but to have attained the El Dorado of which adventurers have dreamed in vain? And yet, to become possessed of it in fee simple, we are not called to stir a step from our own door.

The kingdom of God is within you; you have but to take possession and it is yours. It is yours; nay, He is yours, who is King over the universe and over you.

We are not called, I say, to stir from our own doors to enter on the possession of this

kingdom. It were perhaps true to go farther than that, and to say that it is within our own doors that it can be sought with the best prospect of success. "Enter thou into thy closet," we are told, "and shut to the door, and pray to thy Father which is in secret." And yet should I be altogether wrong if I said that the place where this treasure is to be found is that where we are least willing to spend our time? One would sometimes think that the first object in our lives was to live as much as possible in public, to allow as little quiet as possible for listening to the voice which speaks inwardly. Although He be not far from every one of us, it would seem as though, with bootless endeavour, we tried to fly our fastest from Him—no pause, no breathing-time even, in which He might make Himself heard, but one whirl of unceasing excitement, in which, if we step aside for one instant to drop a tear where a companion lies in death, we are caught up the next minute in the mad round, and swept along unrestful as ever.

Is it the case, as one is so inclined to suppose,

that the thought of which I have spoken as so comforting is anything but a welcome recollection to the larger number among us? Is it the case that the presence within is so little of a reality to us that the last thing that we desire to remember is that the very same presence is all around us? For the two are inseparably connected. If the presence of God around us is to be welcome, it must be because His presence within is realised, retired to, enjoyed. If it fail to be the most blessed of thoughts, it must be the most unwelcome and disquieting, that we are surrounded by, bathed in that presence. To remember that all lies open to Him which we never have asked Him to come and share; that, unhallowed by any real dedication, the interior life of our heart lies bare in its desecrated sanctities to Him who claims it for His own, and yet has never been allowed to take possession of it —no wonder that the recollection of this is something that we had rather put away from us.

And yet is it altogether the part of wisdom that the recollection should thus be put away

when the fact remains there all the same? Just look at it unblenchingly for one moment. This heart to which everything has access except Him who created it for Himself, this heart which He called out of nothingness, and fashioned so exquisitely, so tenderly, that He Himself might be enshrined in its secret chamber—His eye is never off it for a single moment. While you are absorbed in your little round, unmindful of Him and of His claims, He is marking, watching, waiting. Patient and unwearied as ever, the love which made us at the first holds on all ready to come to us and to bless us with the possession of Himself. Small wonder if the thought of His patience be one to make us ashamed of what we are.

I am not speaking of anything which can terrify us, but simply of that which should make us blush. The infinite and adorable Creator, the Saviour who loved us to the death, the Holy Spirit of sanctification—Almighty God, in all the glory of His being—stoops to ask for the possession of our hearts, and we turn away and will not yield ourselves to Him.

There is no reproach which comes home to us so keenly as that any one should accuse us of heartlessness. There is nothing that appeals with such power to any who have lapsed from the right path as that we should show, in our intercourse with them, that we give them credit for retaining unimpaired some power to respond to our sympathy. And yet was ever heartlessness so gross for which people feel so little shame as that which is daily displayed towards the Saviour who loved us unto death? Were ever the most primary of sympathies so outraged by lack of response as those by which our hearts are appealed to when God asks us to give ourselves to Him? There are those the deep pathos of whose lives is derived from their having asked but one thing, and been broken-hearted because that one had been refused them. They had given all that they had to bestow, their affections, their lives, their very selves; if they had had aught else to give, they would have bestowed it with the same ready cheerfulness; and in return they have asked but one thing from

those whose plighted troth had been passed to them: love me, and nothing more shall be asked. And they have passed their days broken-hearted because indifference was all that they received. We blush for human nature that this should be. And yet theirs is but human affection; it is but an earthly heart that they have to offer; the utmost that they can say in reproach is that they gave themselves, such as they were, with their imperfections, perhaps with their exactingness, which repelled where it most wished to attract; while the love so often tendered in vain to the proud heart of irresponsive humanity is the love of God made Man for the sake of His creature, who had fallen.

Let us look to it then, one and all, whether we are responding to affection such as this. I am not thinking of an emotional response. The love which God asks of His creatures is a motive rather than a feeling. It is a quiet under-current of determination that the first aim of all we say and do shall be to repay His goodness by being such as He would have

us be. If we can but live in the recollection of His presence, all this will increasingly come to us. For companionship with Jesus in the heart makes the life assimilate to His own. We cannot be petty and unloving, cannot cherish any grudging resentments, cannot allow ourselves in laxity and self-indulgence, while we remember the Guest who is within. It is possible to preserve this recollectedness in the midst of the most exacting engagements, provided only that the calls on our attention are calls that His service imposes. Our whole day may be one rush of occupations, not a minute without its interruption, and yet the consciousness of living in His presence need never fail for one moment. Nay, it may be that the very exigencies of duty are what shall keep Him most vividly before us; that the impossibility of escaping from other things shall make all things more pervaded with Him. But this can only be the case on one condition. We must make opportunities as other duties allow us, to reserve part of our time for Him exclusively. We must never let the calls of mere

enjoyment compete with His claims upon our time. That we may remember God all the day long, we are to set ourselves each day at stated times to shut out other objects of contemplation, and be alone with Him alone. We can carry the spirit of such moments through all the busy times of our day, if we are stern in securing them from interruption. But give up being strict about this, treat your times of intercourse with God as something which you can ever do without, and it will follow that in moments of occupation, you will soon be oblivious of Him altogether.

It is far from being the easiest of tasks to keep the thought of the unseen before our minds in the midst of our ordinary duties. For everything which is worth doing at all makes a certain demand upon our attention, without which it is impossible to do it justice. And to carry through all such employments a reference to something beyond themselves is to make a fresh and formidable call on our powers of self-command. Other motives lie nearer to our actions than the reference of

them all to Almighty God. The appeal to His claims and to His presence comes to us with all the disadvantage which the unseen ever has as against the visible. And this disadvantage can only be counterbalanced by a deliberate setting apart of stated times in which to concentrate ourselves wholly on the unseen. It is conceivable that now and again the claims of duty may interfere with these times, but this will depend almost entirely on the degree of determination that we bring to bear on it. There have been men in the history of British India, who, being the keenest and strictest of officers, have been well known to be up before the dawn, and before the march which anticipated the dawn, to secure, while no calls could interrupt them, their hours of communion with God. Small wonder that men such as these carried the thought of Him with them throughout the day.

Yet if duty should now and then interfere so that direct intercourse with God should be crowded out, we may be sure that He

whom they loved would not allow them to be deprived of His presence. What robs us so fatally of it is that the claims, not of duty but of pleasure are allowed to take precedence of Him. I wonder for how many prayerless days this present Poona season has been responsible, days begun with amusement so early that there has been but a rush from sleep to play, days wound up with amusement so late that people have flung themselves prayerless upon their beds, finding the effort impossible from sheer fatigue. And yet the response of our hearts to His love is something for which the Almighty Creator does not scorn to stoop down and entreat us.

Which, I would ask, is the more marvellous of the two: the affection of the all-loving Creator, or the heartless irresponsiveness of His creature?

THE FORBEARANCE OF JESUS.

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.—*John* iv. 10.

CHRIST'S interview with the woman of Samaria seems to compress into one short conversation a kind of summary of God's dealing with His creatures as it has been displayed in every age since there have been sinners in the world to be won back.

The whole of the unutterable pathos, of the only not incredible paradox of pleading on the part of the Creator with the creature who will hardly be won, is exhibited in the concrete before us.

The weary, thirsty Traveller asks drink of the stranger at the village well. His appeal to the elementary sympathy with the first and last

of human wants falls powerless at first against caste prejudice. And then at once He goes straight to the highest ground on which spiritual appeals can be based; He appeals to the sense of insufficiency, of inadequacy to one's own spiritual needs: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." Knowing well what He would have to come down to, knowing that the life of the poor creature who was before Him was not such as could leave her open to any words which should not first strike home to the sense of sin, He yet assumes that spiritual longing which lies latent in every human heart where it has not been deliberately stifled.

The inevitable answer comes, as He knew beforehand that it must come, showing that the dulled perceptions of the poor sinner could not reach beyond the things of mere sense. Twice over she forces back the conversation to the material water that she needed for her household. Then our Saviour strikes the chord of

her guilty conscience, shows that He knows all the story of her life. She is compelled to acknowledge Him to be a prophet; yet even so she will make a last stand ere she submit herself to the unwelcome admission that her own deep spiritual needs are crying aloud for the supply which is offered to her; she takes refuge in the religious divisions which separate her from this Messenger of Heaven who addresses her with such terrible plainness. If He be a prophet yet still He is a Jew, one of the loathed sectaries the exclusiveness of whose ancestors had driven herself and her fellow-countrymen into schism. Still He discerns that her conscience is at work, that she has fallen back upon ecclesiastical disputes just because she is compelled to acknowledge that unless some loophole can be found she must submit and accept what He has to offer. And so to the conscience which was aroused, how beclouded soever it might be, He again offers that spiritual appeal which had fallen so ineffectual before. And this time the appeal goes straight home: she is won, and becomes the means of winning others.

The longing of Almighty God to save man, man's unwillingness to accept of His salvation, the patient Love which will work on until it wins us, or until we have finally rejected it—these form the old story of the Gospel as it appeals to every heart in every age, and these are what are exhibited to us in this episode in the life of the God-Man. "If thou knewest the gift of God"—thus appealingly does He speak to every conscience. No terrible denunciation on the ignorance which really means the blindness of sin; no doubt about our willingness to give ear, if only we could be brought to understand, but only a pleading "if thou knewest," which assumes that we can be taught and that we shall listen. When He paused to weep over the doomed city the words were, "if thou *hadst known*"; because the doom of communities of men is pronounced upon them irrevocably when the corporate sins of the nation have made it impossible that as a corporate whole it can any longer play a part in God's plans. But when He speaks to an individual soul it is always "if thou *knewest*."

If thou knewest thine own inadequacy and the power of Omnipotence to supply it, if thou knewest the sinfulness of thy sin and the power of the Saviour to atone for it, if thou knewest the extremity of thy weakness and the power of the Blessed Spirit to give thee strength —in one word, if thou knewest the depth of the Love which will take thee being such as thou art, and make thee all that God would have thee to be. He assumes that thou wouldest ask of Him, that He might give thee all that thou needest, and more than thou art able to ask.

I would dwell upon one or two of the manifestations of this marvellous patience and tenderness which characterise the dealings of God.

And first, what we know of His tenderness in dealing with the intellectual bewilderments which hinder some hearts that would fain seek Him. Alas, that our own impatience should be what so often throws this into relief! Christ said only "if thou knewest," though He saw with such terrible plainness the sin which half accounted for the ignorance, nay, though He

was ready, when the opportunity presented itself, to force home the conviction of the sin with a love too deep to be scrupulous. What do we say too often, though our own eyes are holden by sin till we know too little of God to form a judgment on the responsibilities of man? "You ought to know," say we, where Jesus said only "if thou knewest." It is true that people ought to know. It is true that God does reveal enough to make our want of Him palpable to us, and to direct us to the supply of that want. It is true that when we do not know God, it is not blindness of the understanding alone, but some degree of moral blindness which hinders us. All this is terribly true. But it was true, it never was more true than of her, the sinful woman of Sychar, and yet He said only "if thou knewest," that He might arouse some desire for the knowledge.

Laying aside all assumption of superior knowledge, speaking only as a brother in sin who has found mercy to learn something of Christ's love, I would say to some who are groping bewildered: brother, sister, if *thou* didst

but know; "if thou knewest the gift of God," nay, the gift which is God Himself, the undeserved, the all but unsought communication of God to the soul which comes when all else is cast aside except the consciousness of the unendurable need which forces the soul to His feet. Thou, too, hast in some measure felt it. The very questionings, the obstinate insistencies which, it may be, are really at the bottom of so many of the negations around us; the stress of the soul's inadequacy to itself, so humiliating, so hard to acknowledge that many a one labours to stifle it before he will admit the craving—all these are crying out on your side for that gift which the pleading love of Almighty God is but waiting, nay, longing to impart. Ask your heart if this be not the case, that the very sense that you cannot do without Him is sometimes what makes you clutch at the excuse that He is hidden and that there is no way of knowing Him. Yield your will to the dictates of your heart, and turn to the God who seems hidden, and see whether that voice really mocked you, which said by the well of Samaria: "if thou

knewest the gift of God." Fuller knowledge will come in His good time. Do you "will to do His will," by yielding to that sense of your need which He has implanted in your heart, and hereafter you shall "know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether" He spoke of Himself. Human teachers may, perhaps, have been impatient, may have misunderstood your bewilderment. The bare fact that it is bewilderment still, that it has not hardened into carelessness about knowing, is the proof that the patience of God waits for you as unwearied as ever.

More astonishing than His patience with bewilderment is His waiting while we wander in sin. For sadly often this wants the excuse, or, at least, no love but His own would admit that we had the excuse, of any want of adequate knowledge. We may have known but very little of the truth so as to be able to put it into words. But of this we had no shadow of a doubt that what we did was against God's law. Which of us, as we look back through our past lives, dare claim that we can apply to our own

case the prayer which Christ prayed for His murderers at the very moment when they nailed Him to the Cross? Yet which dare think of himself that Christ did not pray: "Father, forgive him," because conscience forbids the response, "for I knew not what I did"? To the terrible blindness of sin not less than to the groping of bewilderment, He still says, "if thou knewest." Man says to us, you are wholly without excuse, you have sinned against light and against knowledge. Nay, we dare not say less to ourselves lest we should come before God as deceivers. Christ knows the deceitfulness of sin and the deceivableness of the hearts that give way to it, and says to us, "if thou knewest." And who does not know of himself, if he knows anything of an attempt at higher things, how the first real glimpse of his own sinfulness is as much a clearing up of his ignorance as an awakening of his desire to do better? Of course we might have known all along; of course in a certain sense we did know. Yet we feel that it is no paltering with the truth, no departure from His own perfect

honesty; that it is only the comprehension of deep sympathy understanding all the blindness which overwhelms us, when Christ says of the most wilful of sinners that still he did not know what he did, did not realise the intensity of the love which we were wounding so basely to the quick, did not know how the gift of God was within us to restrain us from the sins which we persuaded ourselves we could not help.

Think again, as the last example of God's patience, of the way He bears with the manifold stumblings of those who fain would serve Him. Perhaps to those who have experienced it for themselves, this will appear to be the most wonderful of all. It is not that their actual sins are as great as those of which we have just been thinking. It is that their nearness to Himself makes the ingratitude so wofully deeper. There are awful denunciations here and there which, perhaps, have sent a thrill of great terror through the heart of every servant of God who has ever dared to say of himself that he hoped for Christ's sake he was

forgiven. Those appalling occasional passages about those "who have once been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have known the good word of God and the powers of the world to come," and who yet, after all, "fall away," who is there that is deeply in earnest that has not, sometimes, had to tremble over these? That sin against the Spirit of God, that grieving, that quenching of the Spirit, that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost which we are warned can never be forgiven—it is a part of every clergyman's experience to have had to comfort sin-stricken souls who were in dread that they had incurred such guilt.

And yet the word of God stands sure: "The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin;" "Whoso cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." And people tremble just because it is God's goodness, so often renewed in their own experience, which makes it seem as though sin upon their part must have exposed them to some terrible malediction from which nothing can ever set them free. Far be it from any minister of the Gospel to

explain away the aggravated guilt which comes from turning one's back upon that which has been specially brought home to one. God forbid that the sinfulness of such sins should be watered down by any words from this pulpit! But let those who know that they have sinned deeply against a Love which has marked them out for its own yet remember that none can be rejected except those who refuse to turn to God. Even to dread being cast out from His Presence is the proof, as far as this life is concerned, that we have not been finally cast out; for it shows that the deeper side of our nature, that all which makes up our real self, is, after all, on the side of what is good. It shows that the Holy Spirit of grace is still working strongly in our hearts. To desire to be forgiven and taken back means that, in spite of all our backslidings, we still regard God as our chief good. And if we still regard Him as our chief good, how is it that we have grace so to do? How is it that we have not quite turned our backs and ceased to desire or to regard Him? We know well

that it was naught but His grace that ever led us to come to Him at all; we know that if we ever held fast to Him, it was still the same grace that kept us true; and if now we but desire to be forgiven — if, after our innumerable wanderings, we still hope that we may learn to do better—then what is it but the working of the same grace that is still going on in our hearts? To give up, to refuse utterly to try—that alone can separate us from God; and it lies in the power of every one of us to determine that, let come what come may, at least the attempt to do right shall end only with the last breath that we draw.

Over how many a despairing soul, which can hardly be brought to look up and to see how the face of the Saviour still looks its wonted love upon His own, is He saying, as of old, at this moment, "If thou knewest the gift of God," if thou knewest how unweariedly He loves thee, how all that thou hast done in His despite does but give Him yet another opportunity of proving that His patience still waits, thou wouldst still come back to Him

once more, and let Him save thee in spite of thyself.

For here is the inexplicable mystery of the relations of man with his God—the whole story of His dealings with His creatures as we learn it in every page of His revelation—that He is more willing to save us than we to be delivered from ourselves; that the pleading, pathetic love which refuses to take a refusal is all to be found on His side who is infinitely blessed without us; that the trifling, or the obstinate refusal, oft repeated and hardly overcome, is to be found on the side of the sinful creature whose only hope of any good is to be found in the mercy of God.

GODLY SOCIETY AS A HELP TO GOOD LIVING.

Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. —*St. John* xv. 14.

HE, it has been said, is unfit for society who does not know how to be alone—alone with God and his own heart. But, on the other hand, it is generally in good company that we learn to be fit for that blessed solitude. The human fellowship which is sometimes our greatest snare may become also the source of our deepest blessings.

There is society which sends us home hungry-hearted, poorer, spiritually, than we were before. But there is society which sends us back to our own company with more of God's Presence than we took into it. It is

of such godly society that we are to think as a help to good living.

The test, then, of godly society is not simply the proportion of the talk which is given to the subject of religion; that would often be fallacious indeed. It is not the mention of the Name of our Heavenly Father, but the continual recollection of His Presence which constitutes society godly. That company is good, as I use the word, where the recollection of Him is never wholly absent; where the thought of Him brings no constraint, though its restraining power is never wanting; where, indeed, the charm and the brightness come as much from the remembrance of the Invisible, as from the sight of the visible guests.

There are aspects of the helpfulness of such society, of the loss which the want of it entails, on which it is almost needless to dwell. Still, the truth of our moral adaptability to the environment with which we surround ourselves is so terrible in some of its aspects, so encouraging and helpful in others, that I must

risk seeming to dwell on mere truisms, rather than leave it untouched altogether.

It is the case, then, that for good or for evil, we draw in a subtil moral atmosphere with every breath that we breathe among our fellows. We may flatter ourselves that we are insusceptible to our surroundings; that we rather mould them than they us; that we act in our own proper character, not in that which our circumstances would assign to us; we may even try in our overt acts and words to play out the special rôle which we have adopted; and all the while, to our loss or to our gain, we have been assimilating, as an atmosphere to change our blood, the tone of the society around us. This is terribly true of what is evil, though God's grace is sufficient to protect us against becoming wholly enslaved to it. It is true of what would fain be indifferent, and which, therefore, stands condemned of being evil. It is true, thank God, of what is good, if we only are not hardened against it till "the things which should have been for our wealth become to us an occasion of falling."

If we are in any degree attracted towards the good from the feeling that we desire to be like them, or at least that it were better for us if we were so, then be sure that we cannot associate with them without being in some way the gainers. And it is an experience as common as it is painful to any one who knows society widely, and who sees it under various outward circumstances, how the absence of godly surroundings can induce a rapid deterioration even where the will is, on the whole, on the right side. One sees so many who have been brought up in pious homes, and who have seemed, when their surroundings were favourable, to have appreciated and used their advantages, who succumb to the want of all sympathy which oppresses them, it may be in a small station, or in the set into which marriage has introduced them.

With experiences such as these in one's mind, it was impossible to absolve oneself altogether from saying something on the mere power of our surroundings to influence us in spite of ourselves. But besides this impalpable influ-

ence which should make us careful in the choice of our company, it is most important to our spiritual interests not to live altogether, or for the most part, in company where all expression of religious feeling, all plain enunciation of deep principles would appear to us grotesque, or out of place. It is Carlyle, I think, who has taught us how infinitely a conviction gains strength when we have brought one human being to share it; how it thereupon takes shape, as it were, outside of us; how it becomes, in a moment, when we have so propagated it, not simply a belief of our own to be acted upon or not as we see fit, but a force with whose power to compel us we are obliged henceforward to reckon.

Now how much do we not habitually throw away of the force which our religious convictions might gain by being communicated to others? And yet, of all the convictions of our lives, it is these which need the most reinforcement if they are to become the supreme power over our actions. If we fail to give them social surroundings, which shall not quite

check their free expression, we go far towards extinguishing them altogether.

And just because we are English men and women it is certain that surroundings which are uncongenial will check their expression completely. For the reserve which is characteristic of English life is in nothing so marked and so deep as in our reticence on spiritual matters. With regard to these it is made almost a point of honour; for in addition to our national characteristic of saying least where we feel most deeply, there comes in to check free speech upon such subjects the intense individualism of Protestants. The things which concern a man's soul lie, we say, between himself and his Maker. And so it comes that to address a man about religion is often looked upon as on a par with the social *gaucherie* which asks awkward questions about his relatives, or appears to know too much about his income.

Now I am far from passing a simple condemnation on what is thus part and parcel of English goodness. If this reticence effects nothing else for us, I believe that, by a kind

of reaction, it helps to make us a church-going people. Men must have some outlet for what is in them, and public worship is a means of expressing, with the minimum of individual ostentation, the fact that we acknowledge our obligations to a supernatural order of things. And, indeed, it is at the bottom a healthy feeling which makes us shrink from the possibilities of unreality which we associate with glib speech on deep matters.

But it is sadly possible to go too far in this direction, and that especially when to national reserve there are added the surroundings of life in India. For we none of us, I think, would affirm that society as we know it best here, was pervaded by that special atmosphere which I spoke of as constituting it godly; that a reference of all things to Almighty God forms the habitual background of our social intercourse. Indeed, I think that I hardly challenge contradiction when I say, that if we had to find a phrase which could describe our Anglo-Indian society in its attitude towards serious questions, the adjective which would

rise to one's lips would be—one very different from "godly."

And so we start in our mutual relations with a distrust of each other's earnestness in what is good. Add to this our instinctive abhorrence of even seeming to go beyond what we really feel, and the disinclination to shake off our reserve becomes well-nigh insuperable to most of us. We aggravate one another's self-consciousness till we pass from avoiding what we do *not* feel into actually disguising what we do feel. We become absolutely tongue-tied about religion till we give people the impression that we ignore it. Then this tells in turn on our own thoughts, until it is possible that we may even blush before ourselves for what we conceal so determinedly from others. We begin by not speaking of what we feel deeply; we may end by ceasing to feel what we never speak of.

It is just everything, then, that we should try to choose our friendships where reserve such as this will not be needed; where at all events it will be tacitly assumed that we take

as the end of our daily walk, not the passing things of this world, but "Jesus Christ; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

For it is on this that our choice of company will really turn. All depends on whether we wish to live our life *for* society or only in the midst of it; whether company is to be a means to something higher, or whether it is an end in itself. If it is to be one of our means of finding Christ, then assuredly we shall ask first in every company whether we feel that He is welcomed and recognised there; whether we can help others to find Him; whether they will draw us to His Presence. We must all of us have known what it was to ache for some one face that we miss, to find all company flat and unprofitable which does not include, or at least recall it. There is a loyalty to the Presence of the Saviour, to all that can recall Him to our hearts, which is comparable to a longing such as this, for

> . . . . the touch of a vanished hand,
> And the sound of a voice that is still.

Only that this is for no memory alone, but

for that which brings the thrill of a living Presence. We have had the ineffable honour of being called to the friendship of Jesus Christ. "Ye are My friends," He has said to us, "if ye do whatsoever I command you." Set the stamp of a lofty friendship upon a man, not to say of a love that has been worth loving, and you shall find, for the remainder of his life, that he will be nice about the company that he keeps. If one shrine in the recesses of his heart be ever consecrated to an affection or to a memory, it will go hard but he at least makes an attempt to entertain nothing quite unworthy of it.

Let Jesus Christ have such a place in your affections, let the innermost room in your heart be consecrate to meeting with Him, and it cannot be that even the antechambers can be occupied to our comfort by mere worldlings. In so far as you must live among them, it will be with a certain reserve, from the thought of the other Guest whom you entertain. The outer courts must not ring with ribald laughter, must not even be given over to mere thoughtless-

ness, while He is entertained in the inner shrine. You could not acquiesce in the incongruity if your heart were turning ever to His Presence. It is only when you allow yourself to forget it that you can cease to be particular about your company. You cannot expect Him to acquiesce in it, to share your heart with the ungodly or the indifferent. He has condescended to treat you as His friend, *but* on condition of standing first in your affections. And if He stand first in your affections, other friendships will be chosen for His sake, and so as not to be incompatible with His. Failing this, you cannot expect that He should abide with you.

But be there room in your heart for the humblest who is living for love of Jesus Christ. Be little failings forgotten in the great interest of affection for the One common Saviour. Let even some lack of refinement, some jarrings on your sense of good taste be forgiven to disciples of the Master, who can help you to live in His Presence. After all, we are but companions on

a journey: we need think only of who helps us to reach the end.

It sometimes happens that those who please us in other ways are but hindrances with regard to the consummation. Nay, those who so please us to-day may very likely disappoint us to-morrow.

When the end of the journey is in sight, we shall think little of the passing enjoyment which this or that companion afforded us: we shall think much of how one and another have helped or hindered the one object. That object is to be pleasing to Jesus Christ, to be worthy of the love with which He honours us.

MISSIONS

AND THEIR DEPRECIATORS.

We preach Christ crucified.—1 *Corinthians* i. 23.

SUCH is the substance of the Gospel message to the world—Jesus Christ in His glory and in His shame; Jesus Christ lifted up upon the Cross, that He might draw all men unto Himself; Jesus Christ lifted up upon His throne, that, being drawn to Him, they may find Him their all.

A word, first, upon the character of the message, on the sum and substance of the Church's proclamation. "We preach Christ crucified;" we put forward not principles alone, but principles embodied in a Person; we inculcate, not a system alone, but a living relation to a living Friend; we offer the power to make the system a reality, which comes from contact with the Teacher Himself. Nay, more than

that, we bring no mere influence of a living Teacher, who is in contact with His scholars yet outside them; the Teacher to whose feet we bring the learners, will pass within them, and lives in them what He teaches.

Let us expand these great ideas a little farther, and then we shall see whither they lead us.

We teach, not principles alone, but principles embodied in a Person, and that Person, the crucified Jesus. Every word that we have to speak to the human heart comes before it in the most touching of appeals, the tender pleading of a Friend who gave His life, so that His words and His example might come home to us. Moral principles presuppose in the hearer some dim notion of moral obligation, some rudimentary idea to be appealed to, that inclination is not all that we ought to live for. Apart from this, they are no more cogent in people's lives than a mathematical proposition would be. But a dying Friend who went voluntarily to death, that we might try to imitate His life—there you have a very different

appeal, to which no heart is too uncultured to respond. "All this I bore for thee—what hast thou done for me?" To this appeal savage hearts can respond as well as the cultured can do. Affection and bodily pain—these speak a language coextensive with humanity; these appeal without the aid of an interpreter. Here at least we have universal credentials for a religion which claims universality.

And this Teacher, who gave His life for the learners, gives them the power to act out His teachings. He does not stop short at supplying them with a motive, invaluable as this would be. He supplies to their weak wills and sordid natures the ability to respond to the motive.

If the motive gives universal credentials to a religion which claims to be universal, then the power of responding to the motive follows up the universal credentials with a proof of universal applicability. Needs must that a universal religion not only appeal to all alike, but be capable of assimilation by all alike. For the worst fate that could befall a human

being were surely the terrible irony of being supplied with the highest of motives, and being by nature incapacitated from responding to it.

But universal credentials and universal applicability—these will constitute a religion universal, provided only its own followers give it fair play. Let it be brought as it should be brought before the world, and it must carry everything before it.

Why, then, have we to preach for missions at the present day? Why is there still a call for missions after nineteen centuries of Christianity? Worse still, why is it open to our depreciators to say that missions are a failure? The answer is that which I have indicated—its own followers do not give it fair play. We fail sadly to commend it to non-Christians; we almost refuse to present it to the world, in its claims to universal dominion. Where we do attempt so to present it, we do not always take pains to do it justice. Indeed, contrasted with mercantile effort or with the political struggles of the day, it shows in a

lamentably half-hearted aspect. There is a contrast, and a very painful contrast between the ideal which I have tried to put before you, of what the Church has to bring to mankind, and what we know in actual practice of the way in which her task is discharged. In many ages it has simply been neglected, been left undone, or even unattempted. Nor can we claim for the days in which we live, that they have effected much beyond making a mere beginning at overtaking the neglects of the past?

In speaking, then, about the Church's great task in presenting the Gospel to the world, I would say that in all the efforts of the present day the key-note ought to be struck in humiliation.

We are doing something, how little God knows, to repair the neglects of our fathers in relation to the heathen world. Let us beware that we remember, as we do it, how we have to take our share of humiliation for the national sins of the past. And, beginning thus with humiliation about the past, let us be ready to

receive light upon the present from what quarter soever it may come. If our ideas on the subject of mission work have been insular, conventional, inadequate, let us be ready to look at them as such. If we have failed in producing, as a Church, many men of the type of enthusiasts who are best fitted for swaying the heathen world, let us admit the fact as soon as it is pointed out to us, and set ourselves to work and to pray that men of the highest type may be vouchsafed to us. We have had them, have had them here in this country. Simeon O'Neil was a true son of our own Church, and the Gordon who was killed at Kandahar was another, though of a different type. Bishop Hannington proved in Central Africa what the power of enthusiasm was, and the boys whom he baptized into Christ died in tortures rather than deny Him. Bishop Pattison lived and died in Melanesia, a missionary of the true ascetic type. But whatever be the type that is needed, I believe that the Anglo-Saxon stock is capable of producing the raw material, and that the historic Church of England is capable

of training it for the work. Let us begin, then, by admitting our shortcomings, and the strength to make them good will be supplied.

If there are shortcomings, social or intellectual, let those, too, be faced and made good. Let us see to it that the Church in our own country is reminded that the best she has to give were hardly good enough for the task which lies before her, that anything short of her best is unworthy of it and of herself.

And let us be willing to learn by example, even if it come in grotesque or repulsive forms. Wherever there is enthusiasm and self-denial, there we may be sure that we shall find something to imitate. So far from decrying any effort of which the glory of God is the object, let us rejoice in it in as far as it is legitimate; let us copy it in as far as it is admirable; let us pray for it in as far as it is mistaken; let us supplement it in as far as it is inadequate.

But while we accept light and example, from what quarter soever they may come to us, let us beware how we fall into the sad faults which are so common in modern criticisms on

missions. If you have felt, as doubtless many of you have felt, how inadequate, from almost every point of view, is the work of the Church in this country, I would put before you certain dangers to be avoided, I would urge certain maxims to be observed, as you criticise it or try to improve upon it.

First, wholesale denunciation of what we have is not the way to secure what we require. Least of all when such denunciation is recklessly inaccurate about facts. Do not, then, be a denouncer of existing missions. If you are conscious that they want much improvement, bethink you whether you ever improved any one by mere unsympathetic depreciation. And if you never helped an individual in that way, bethink you whether a Society can be so helped. Ask whether the corporate self-respect of a great body is not sensitive beyond the sensitiveness of individuals; whether men, who would be humble and forbearing if you depreciated their individual efforts, are not likely to be pained past endurance when it is their *esprit de corps* that is ruthlessly wounded.

Beware, again, of that miserable so-called humour which finds in the conventionalities of a religious party material for a most invidious kind of sneering. Suppose that it is ever so true that the phraseology of a particular school of goodness has shown a tendency to become uninvitingly stereotyped; that we have acquired certain associations with certain phrases which prejudice us against those who make use of them; it is still true that, to the members of those circles, they embody experiences and aspirations among the noblest that ever thrilled human bosoms. In the training of those whom we love, and in the expression of our own deepest feelings, let us, by all means, employ words and phrases which are free from the savour of conventionality. But let us treat with the most reverent respect the honoured phrases which helped to save the Church of England from being smothered in a worse conventionality, the conventionality of sheer deadness and indifference.

If you associate missionary effort with such conventions, then ask yourself what this really

means. It means that Evangelicals did the work when others stood still, or attempted little. If it is associated with evangelical conventionality, it was at least done by evangelical fervour. Let us respect it, then, with shame for our own shortcomings.

And we must remember that, for the work which is being done by any society or any school, we must accept the men that are forthcoming whether we believe that they could be improved upon or not. They, at least, are actually there; the other type has, to a great extent, to be created. And its creation is no such easy matter. We cannot say, give us celibates and ascetics, and then find that they come at our mere call. I quote from one who has a right to speak on such subjects, from a paper read at the Church Congress, by the head of the Cowley Society, on one type of the ascetic life. "Have we a question as to the desirableness of reviving the religious, that is to say, the monastic life of men? I think it is answered. If God wills it, it will be. If God does not call men to this life, no power

of man can accomplish the revival. We might as well stand in a churchyard, and bid the dead bones live, as attempt to initiate a form of life within the Church, which cannot burst into blossom save by the power of the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Life-giver."

Thus it is with any particular form of devotion to the work of Almighty God. We must pray Him to call it into being. We must be so living ourselves that we may be contributing our own quota conscientiously to the common life of the Church. And then if it be the will of God to call forth a new form of energy, for which we, perhaps, are utterly unsuited, then at least we shall have done our little best; we shall have helped to make the spiritual atmosphere such that all forms of goodness can flourish in it. But neither the ascetic, nor any other type of goodness, was ever called, or assisted into being by mere depreciation of other types. New forces accrue to the Church through her diligent use of what she has, under the fostering blessing of her great Head. If she is using the men who come to

hand, with their zeal, their work, their learning, such as they have to contribute of each, it is through them that present work must be effected, and that the workers of the future must be called forth. Do not withdraw, then, your sympathy and your support from those who are doing what they can, on the plea that you believe that other men could do the work better if they were to be found. At present they are not to be found, and if they are ever to be forthcoming it will be through using, not through neglecting, the means which are ready to our hand.

But above all things let me warn you against one fallacy which has been introduced into the consideration of missions, that of attempting to estimate results by reckoning money spent against converts made. To make the duty of preaching the Gospel depend upon visible results is a fallacy in itself to begin with. Our duty is to fulfil Christ's command to preach the Gospel to every creature. With results we have no possible concern. Suppose we preached it for a century in any country, and not a

single conversion was made, still, results are a matter for God, it is with duty that His Church is concerned. He has never told us that the whole world is to be converted. Nay, Christ said, in one of the most pathetic of His utterances, "when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith upon the earth?" The saved are always spoken of as a remnant throughout the Old and the New Testaments alike. Our duty remains exactly the same, whether men hear or whether they forbear.

But if it is a fallacy to deal with results in considering the Church's duty to the heathen world, it is nothing less than an insult to Almighty God to set results against the money that is laid out on them. Suppose that all the money spent on missions had saved one soul from death, should we be prepared to say that it had been wasted? That one soul cost the Blood of Jesus Christ, and are we to weigh out sovereigns as its price, and say that it cost more than it was worth? And if we say that the money might have been spent better, let us remember, with a shudder, who it was that

said that the ointment might have been sold, and the money given to the poor. The anointing of the feet of Jesus Christ was a good office voluntarily undertaken; yet He rebuked him who grudged the money to His sacred person. The money which is spent upon missions is laid out in fulfilling His last command. Shall we dare then to say that it might be spent better? Not, at any rate, while millions upon millions are spent every year upon pure luxuries. I believe the drink-bill of England in one year comes to more than has been spent upon missions since the two great Societies have existed.

But it is said that missionaries of the ascetic type cost so much less than those who have wives and families. True, no doubt, but hardly appropriate in the mouths of those who give but a trifle to put forward the work of the Church — a work of which they talk, while others are doing it in their measure. Let me quote again from the same paper by Father Benson :—"I will not speak of religious communities as means of getting work done very

cheaply. Such an idea I can only regard as a sacrilege, as an insult to God. We have no right to wish that God's work may be done without cost to ourselves. Those who labour in poverty will have God's blessing rest upon them for serving Him. How can they be blest who refuse to share the burden? I cannot contemplate religious communities as a means of extricating us from embarrassments which are simply occasioned by a habit of sinful greed. They would be doing more harm than good if they seemed to sanction a state of things so hateful to God." I might quote farther to the same purpose; but, instead, let me add on my account, that I can find no words to stigmatise the meanness which spends money on pampering itself, and then says to the missionary in his work—work done always on a mere subsistence allowance—how very much cheaper you would be if only you were a man without a home! Vicarious work done at the cost of vicarious asceticism, on behalf of those who never stir a finger to set forward the Kingdom of God—a cheap and easy way, truly, of

discharging oneself of one's duty to the heathen world! Do not stoop to this meanness at least, but since we have not got an army of ascetics to carry out the mission-work of the Church in that which, no doubt, were the highest way, at least give something to those who do it, and prevent its being altogether left undone. And if you require to be assured upon the point, let me certify you from twelve years' experience of them, that at any rate the missionaries of India are, in proportion to their education and their abilities, the worst paid Europeans in the country.

But let us end in a higher strain than this. You are asked to give something of your money for that for which Christ gave Himself. You are asked to sympathise with, and to pray for that for which He agonised and died. You are asked to help to bring Christ to the people in the measure of the Church's ability. Pray, then, that that ability may be multiplied, be it great or be it small at this moment. But, at any rate, do not stand aloof and say that you would give help if it were less needed.

FACILITY OF DIVORCE,

THE ABOLITION OF MARRIAGE.

What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.—*St. Matthew* xix. 6.

IN the letter addressed to the Church by the Bishops who met at Lambeth last July, there is a paragraph on the sanctity of marriage. After glancing at the connection of the subject with other and still deeper moral principles, the letter treats of "the maintenance of the sanctity of marriage as the centre of social morality." "This," it says, "is seriously compromised by facilities of divorce which have been increased in recent years by legislation in some countries. We have, therefore, held it our duty to reaffirm emphatically the precept of Christ relating thereto, and to offer some advice which may guide the clergy of our Communion in their

attitude towards any infringement of the Master's rule." It is a fact bearing very significantly on the call for such a declaration, that within a fortnight of its being given to the world, the columns of a widely-circulated newspaper were thrown open with jaunty indifference to a discussion whose issue was simply this: whether marriage should be made a terminable contract.

The plea put forward in favour of relaxation is the large proportion of marriages which prove unhappy. So many, it is urged, turn out wretched, fail at least to answer to expectation, that unless such may be dissolved by consent, untold suffering is inflicted on individuals, and marriage itself is discredited.

The sufferings of individual men and women appeal so keenly to the hearts of every one of us, that only the weightiest of considerations on the other side can prevent our conceding everything for their relief. Still the pains of individual sufferers cannot be allowed to outweigh the common good. If the measures proposed for their relief are fatal to the well-

being of society, then the sufferings of even numerous individuals must not induce us to give the rein to our sympathies at the expense of higher principles of action. We may not sacrifice all that is noblest because it so often sinks below its proper level, and that with results so sad. What, then, is that general principle, all-important to society at large, which forbids us to relax the marriage bond in favour of those who have found it irksome? It may be summed up in, literally, a dozen words—to make marriage a terminable contract is, virtually, to abolish it altogether.

The discussion so jauntily embarked upon, and carried on in some quarters with such levity, had for its practical issue simply this—whether marriage is to be abolished or retained as the key-stone of the social structure of modern England.

I repeat, then, the great principle which I would prove to you—to admit divorce wherever all is not happy is to make marriage a terminable contract, and to make marriage a terminable contract is, virtually, to abolish it altogether.

From the first day when facilities are granted for retiring from a loathed union at will, half the sacredness of marriage is abolished. And the ultimate tendency of such a course is the actual and admitted abolition of marriage as we now understand it. That this end is in actual contemplation by the extreme party all over Europe it is perhaps not necessary that I should prove. But it is essential that the fact should be kept before us in dealing with the attacks upon marriage which have disgraced some of our home newspapers lately. I have read in their own words, and that repeatedly, the proposition that it is not to be tolerated that husband and wife should be bound together if either desires to be set at liberty. For this, mark you, is the length to which the aims of the extreme party go—that there is no need of mutual consent before separation is granted, that every husband and every wife has an indefeasible right to be set at liberty, *without the consent of the other party*, the moment the union becomes distasteful. And this, I think all will admit, is the abolition of marriage in plain terms.

But you will say that such extreme steps as these are advocated only by a few communists. I am not sure but that these few communists or anarchists will have much to say in the future of Europe. I am quite sure that to avert such a danger must be the aim of all believers in Christianity, and of all who prefer government to anarchy. But I would confine myself to the lesser measures of relaxation which are proposed by more moderate people. And so I desire to prove to you in detail that all measures which facilitate divorce, on the ground of domestic unhappiness, tend ultimately, and by inevitable gravitation, towards abolishing marriage as an institution.

In support of this contention I submit two simple propositions:—First, if marriage is to be retained as an institution, it must have some fixed basis of principle with which it is impossible to tamper; and, second, that basis of principle must be its practical indissolubility as laid down by our Lord Jesus Christ.

In other words, if marriage is to be marriage, the laws which regulate it in the nation must

be based not on phases of opinion, but on a principle which is admitted on all sides to be final and to admit of no appeal. And the only principle which has this element of finality is, that, with perhaps a single exception, there is nothing which can separate wife and husband, "so long as" they "both shall live"—nothing, I mean, which can so separate wife and husband as to give them the right to re-marry.

I proceed then to draw out my first statement, that if marriage is to be retained as an institution, it must have some fixed basis of principle with which it is impossible to tamper.

And here I ask you to remember one fact—that there is nothing in the whole range of human life about which people are so fiercely determined that they will have their own way at all costs. We are here encamped on the chosen ground of battle where passion in every age of the world has hurled forth its great defiance to principle; where the deadliest struggle has taken place between the higher and the lower natures in man. And hard must be the conflict of principle even if it present

itself as absolute and unchangeable. Ask people to submit to control in that which touches them most closely, and even if the control that you bring to bear on them be the light and easy yoke of Jesus Christ, you will find that the tendency to licence dies hard where it dies at all. What chance, then, remains on the side of principle if it must face this terrible encounter deprived of its supernatural sanction and, with that, of its character for consistency? What prospect of victory lies before it if it present itself at the challenge of passion without the armour of consistency and inviolability? If principle is so much as to get a hearing when the tempest of passion is abroad, it must be a principle from which there is no appeal: it must come to us with the sanction of some authority to contest which is to stand self-condemned. In other words, it must have Divine sanction: nothing else can give it this element of unchangeableness.

'Let it come forward' with any other appeal, and passion will simply laugh it to scorn. For though passion is often illogical, in one

point it never misses the mark. It refuses to accept any controlling influence except principles which it recognises to be principles. To these it will admit that it ought to bow, however it may sometimes defy them. But it will not recognise as a principle what, after all, is but passion in disguise. And what, I ask, is any variable divorce law laid down in any one age, except simply the passions of that age masquerading under the guise of legal principles? Such a law represents the exact balance which was struck by the ruling class at a given day between the claims of impulse and of expediency. Now is it likely that the passions of the next age will accept such a ruling as this? Will living men's fiercest impulses pay respect to dead men's laws, if those laws have no ground of fixed principle? Each age makes its own laws for its own passions according to their intensity and their unscrupulousness. More intense, more unblushing, from year to year, in Europe, in America, in Australia, has become the fierce determination of modern life to have its own way in this matter. More lax, more con-

temptible, more illogical becomes the stand which is made for rule when once the principle has been admitted that marriage laws can be altered at will, that they are not matter of unchangeable obligation laid down by indisputable authority. The question comes simply to this—whether passion is to be admitted to a hearing or is simply to be lashed down like a wild beast. Acknowledge that it deserves to have a hearing, and principle is virtually dethroned, and its great rival installed in its room. Acknowledge that a compromise is possible between the claims of inclination and of principle, and the men of each successive generation will settle the concession to inclination exactly to suit their own tastes. Admit the possibility of variation, and every one who is discontented with his home becomes a paid agitator for the exact degree of licence which will give him the change that he desires. And who dare say that on the principle of variability he is not perfectly justified in so becoming? What, he asks, are the decisions of last century that they should curb my liberty

to-day? And once granted that any one century has the right to decide such questions for itself: once granted that they are matter for man's decision, and have no eternal law at their back, and I fail to see how, for the sake of bare consistency, you can refuse any degree of concession which the passions of any age please to call for.

I maintain, then, that a law of marriage which can be altered, is not a law of marriage at all, but ought to be called by some other name. This was what made the late discussion worth noticing. It derived such importance as it had, not so much from the things which were said in it as from the fact that it was possible to say them publicly; from the fact that a widely circulated newspaper, which lies upon thousands of tables, dared to force on the wives and daughters of the middle classes the question whether wifehood as they know it deserves to be abolished or not.

So much, then, of the first principle with which I started, that if marriage is to survive as an institution, it must have a fixed basis of principle with which it is impossible to tamper. But,

second, the only principle which will serve the purpose is that which was laid down by Jesus Christ, that, with, possibly, a single exception, a marriage once lawfully contracted is dissoluble only by death. I say, with one possible exception, because I wish to say nothing this evening in which I may not fairly expect that every loyal Christian will go along with me. The only principle, then, which will give the desired basis, is that every marriage is contracted on such terms that, with a single possible exception, there is nothing which can terminate it except death. This character of indissolubility is the distinguishing feature of marriage. Alter this and it ceases to be marriage. What follows on this abolition; for abolition it surely is? What stands or falls with the great principle that every marriage once lawfully contracted is binding "till death us do part"?

There stand and fall, with the indissolubility of wedlock, the three best things that remain to human nature, the things which are associated with these words—home, husband and wife, and, child.

How fares it with all the blessed relations which we associate with husband and wife, if separation become possible at will? I put it to every man who is a man—is a wife a wife at all if she is bound to you just until you choose to part with her? I put it to every true wife—were a husband a husband at all, if you knew that you could leave him at will, and if you knew this when you took him as your husband? What is it that gives marriage its crown of glory, but its character of inviolability? What is left in it for any one to be proud of if that inviolability be taken away? I think the question answers itself in every mind which is not hopelessly corrupt.

And how fares it, next, with the children whose parents may part if they will? Dare we look any child in the face and say that its father and mother are bound to give it a home just until they grow weary of one another—that it has both a father and a mother just so long as their selfishness or their levity will allow it to retain and enjoy what it associates with those blessed words? It is certain that after they

part the children must belong to one or other, that they cannot be a common possession. It is pretty certain that when new ties are formed, the children who were born of the old one will no longer be regarded with complacency, but will be thought of as an unwelcome burden coming down from a hated past. But suppose them to be the dearest of earthly beings to the one parent who has been left them by the Divorce Court, then who is to compensate them, I wonder, for all that the other ought to be? It does make a difference, I think, to the bringing up of every child, whether one element has been wanting to the home, of the two which ought to make it complete, the element of strength, or the element of tenderness. But you will say that if the home was a wretched one, the children will be better without it. And this brings me to the third of the losses which follow, if wedlock be made terminable.

How fares it with the home under such a law? Is it more or less likely to be wretched if it be possible to break it up at any moment? I know not how other people think of home, but

for myself the leading idea which it conveys to me is that of a place where two or more people live each for the happiness of the other, and trust to find their own in so doing. Wherever this condition obtains, there you have the essential element of home life. Now, is this more or less likely to obtain if people know that they can part at any moment? One of the most important factors which make it up is that mutual adaptation of thought and habit which comes from the necessity of living together. I am only echoing, as you know, the words of a very eminent judge, when I say that there is many a happy home which might once have been a very unhappy one, and which has derived all the happiness which fills it from the sense entertained on both sides that each would do well to make the best of it, as it meant happiness or misery for life, and no third alternative was possible.

Let me draw out the thought in my own way. Mutual self-adaptation for the sake of mutual happiness is what constitutes the essence of the home; the give-and-take in a thousand little

ways which cease under the force of deep affection to be felt as sacrifices at all. Now what becomes of all these in a union which is terminable at will as soon as it is felt to be distasteful? Why bear each with the faults and failings of the other if you know that you can part altogether? Why take so much pains with your own faults if you do not know that unless you can get over them, one you love must be distressed by them for life? The closest bond of the happiest wedded lives lies in the help that each can give the other in living down what might lead to unhappiness. If married life is to be what it ought, each must turn the very failings of the other into material for deep common sympathy as they are struggled against in common by the two whom God has made one. Now the possibility of, and the very wish for such relations, turns simply on the lifelong character of the union.

This is but one of innumerable ways in which home must cease to be home when the tie that holds it together is made terminable. Let it stand for a specimen of the whole, and we find that

with the inviolability of marriage all that makes it what it is must be forfeited. Make marriage, then, a terminable contract, and you take the meaning and the beauty out of those watch-words of all that is noble—home, husband and wife, and, child.

And then what follows for society? That follows which has followed in every country where the fount of domestic virtue has been poisoned: the degradation of individual life, and the extinction of national greatness.

From which things may God in His goodness deliver the Church and people of England!

THE END.

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